DIARY OF A PHYSICIAN

IN

CALIFORNIA;

BEING

THE RESULTS OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE,

INCLUDING

NOTES OF THE JOURNEY

BY LAND AND WATER,

AND

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CLIMATE, SOIL, RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY, ETC.

BY JAMES L. TYSON, M.D.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE following narrative was written with no view to its publication. It is merely a compilation from hasty pencilings to a friend, made during a voyage to, residence in, and return from California. Throughout this time, opportunities were presented of witnessing disease under the different forms in which it exists, not only on the Isthmus and near the latitude of the equator, and in the course of the voyage, but at the mines, where the health of so many is sacrificed in the pursuit of gold. To those who do not "go down to the sea in ships," and have little knowledge of life in California, it may possess some interest. It was thought that its publication at this time, might also be a means of conveying some hints to the emigrant to that distant part of our country, which might in some degree enable him to overcome the evils with which he is menaced, not only on his passage, but after he has taken up his abode at the mines. With this view to its utility, I will compress in as short a space as possible, a few directions, many of which, though diffused through the narrative, if presented in a separate form, will be more accessible, and combine brevity with perspicuity.

In the first place, I would advise all to remain as short a time in Chagres as possible. The exhalations from its malarious atmosphere, are extremely prejudicial to the health of the newcomer. This I noticed in various instances. Engage a canoe, and keep the natives at their work as long as you can, without overfatigue at one time. This is indispensable, or you may be kept on the river longer than is necessary or desirable. Obtain a large canoe if you can, for though your progress will be slower, it is infinitely more comfortable than in a smaller one. Take as little baggage as possible, and in packages weighing not over fifty pounds. Some provisions may be necessary, sufficient for three or four days, though I remarked that a greater disposition for fluids than solids is experienced in crossing the Isthmus. Avoid drinking much of the water, either of the river or mountain streams. They are highly charged with decayed vegetable matter, and are liable to do mischief. Ale, claret, or port wine, may be mixed with the water in small

quantities, or substituted as a drink. Avoid brandy or highly stimulating liquors. Avoid also the heat of the sun as much as possible, and the night air as well as overfatigue while crossing.

Having arrived at Gorgona or Cruces, which should in no instance consume more than two days, obtain a mule at once, if in the morning, and with your trunk on the back of another, start forward with a guide or in the company of others, and you can accomplish the journey to Panama by night. Never attempt to walk over. Do not intrust your trunk to a native. Keep it with you. The dry season, as it is termed, is from the latter part of January till May, when the Gorgona route is preferable. At other times the Cruces road is more desirable. It may happen that the dry or rainy season, will occur earlier or later. This is sometimes the case. Keep as dry as possible.

Arrived at Panama, lodgings are readily obtained. Hotels and eating-houses abound. Be careful not to indulge freely in the fruits of the country. Oranges may be eaten with advantage in the forepart of the day. The climate of Panama is not at all prejudicial to health, if the precautions I have suggested be adopted. Where disease has occurred, either there or on the way to San Francisco, it has most generally been the consequence of imprudence. A pleasant morning and evening seabreeze is felt at Panama, which is any thing but injurious. A daily bath while there will add much to health and comfort.

Attention to these hints, will enable all who journey to California by this route, to pursue their voyage to San Francisco, not only without dread, but with renewed health and vigor. *Eschew a sailing-vessel. Purchase your ticket in New York before starting, and if possible take a cabin passage in the steamer.* If in the steerage, purchase some stores at Panama, or you may repent it. A daily or occasional bath while on the Pacific will be attended with much benefit. Do not indulge too freely in the fruits at the various stopping-places.

If your intention be to visit the mines, conveyance can be readily had at San Francisco, either to Sacramento City on the Sacramento river, or to Stockton on the San Joaquin. I prefer the former. Take as little clothing or other incumbrance to the mines as possible. A change of underclothing, with one good strong suit and your blankets, are all that are necessary. The nights are always cool, and the latter can never be dispensed with. Provisions, such as the country affords, can be readily had at the stores distributed over the country in the vicinity of the mines. You may walk or ride thither, as you see proper, or the state of your finances will permit. If you get to the mines in the spring of the year, go to the "Dry Diggings." There is then sufficient water in the little rivulets and mountain streams, not only for mining purposes, but for your daily wants. If you arrive in the months of August or September, select a

bar on one of the rivers, and keep possession of it. The bars on the north, south, and middle forks of the American River, which empties into the Sacramento, have heretofore been famous. I would prefer the *upper* part of the Juba, where most gold has been found, the Mariposa, or Trinity rivers. The two latter, however, are not so accessible as the former.

Having selected your location, stay there. Proper mining implements can be obtained, either at Sacramento City or at the mines. You will soon become accustomed to the mode of proceeding, either with a shovel, pickax, pan, or washer.

Do not work in the heat of the day. You can accomplish *more* by working *two hours* in the early morning and the same length of time late in the afternoon, and your health will not be so liable to suffer from the unaccustomed toil and exposure. This relaxation from the stooping posture of the miner is indispensable, not only to preserve bodily vigor, but as a protection from disease. It also affords time for domestic duties in the preparation of food, &c., a most important branch of California life, as on the quality of this in a great degree depends, not only the comfort and health, but the life of the miner. Obtain a receipt for making good, not sour bread The exclusive use of dried and salted meats is highly prejudicial. It fires the blood, and prepares the system for disease, which will soon result if its use be persisted in. Some terrible cases of scurvy I witnessed from this cause, and much of the sickness at the mines results from inattention to this matter. Stewed fruits, pickles, and acidulous drinks, should be freely used, if your reliance is on salt provisions. In most of the severe cases of disease, and in many of the deaths which have occurred at the mines, a scorbutic habit prevailed along with the existing complaint. As this bad condition of the system can be so readily avoided, it was strange to me that it should be so prevalent. Men are apt to forget health and every thing in the pursuit of gold. The use of a vegetable diet and fresh meat occasionally, would be a protection from this scourge, but as such luxuries, except the latter at long intervals, could heretofore rarely be obtained in the mining districts, it becomes necessary to guard against it by the means suggested. Cleanliness should never be neglected. Frequent bathing will be found of essential benefit.

With due regard to the foregoing hints, health will rarely suffer. Should sickness in ever so mild a form occur, abandon labor at once, and gain a higher locality, if in the canons of the river. Consult a physician, many of whom are in the neighborhood of the mines, and keep quiet. Above all, avoid the low, marshy, febrile districts on the shores of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers.

It may be said that some have paid little regard to health, and adopted no precautions for its preservation, either on the journey

to California, or during a residence at the mines, and have yet returned unscathed. Such instances are rare exceptions. The majority who work at the mines, rarely leave with their accustomed health, while much fatal sickness has occurred there. *I never saw so many broken-down constitutions as during my brief stay in California.* And this was generally owing to ignorance of, or inattention to, such matters as I have presented.

The writer never enjoyed better health than while in the vicinity of the mines of California. It is true that he was not subjected to the same influences as the miner, but others under similar circumstances, sickened, and sometimes died. His exemption from disease, is mainly attributable to care in diet, and avoidance of such other influences, as prudence and a regard for the laws of health require, and which the miner could as readily adopt as any other.

With these remarks he submits the following pages to the public. Should their perusal prove of utility to any of the thousands who are flocking to our possessions on the Pacific, he will be repaid. At all events they will afford to him who stays at home, a tolerable idea of what the emigrant to California has to endure, not only on his passage thither, but after his arrival, in traversing the country, and digging in the mines of the far-famed El Dorado.

DIARY OF A PHYSICIAN

IN

CALIFORNIA.

CHAPTER I.

Departure.—The Captain's Guess.—A Chase.—Leave the Capes.—Ludicrous Scenes.—Discussion of different Routes.—The Delights of California.—Determine to go to Chagres.—A Man overboard.—Terrible Scene.—A Sabbath Morning.—Amusing Occurrence.—Delightful Atmosphere.—Land ho!—Pass through the "Caicos" Passage.—A Squall.—Pass through the Windward Passage.—Pleasant Views and Spicy Breezes.—Awful Explosion.—Delicious Climate.—A Demonstration.—Sharks and Nautili.—Mountains of the Isthmus.—Terrible Fright.—Cast Anchor.—Dangers of the Entrance to Chagres.

On the ever memorable 16th of January, 1849, I sailed from Baltimore on board the schooner Sovereign, Captain Howard Peterson, master, bound for the Brazos, Vera Cruz, or some other yet undetermined port, that from thence we might be enabled to reach the distant shores of California in the shortest possible time. The passengers numbered fifty, all good men and true. Among them were two physicians and a Rev. Doctor of the Methodist Episcopal church.

Before leaving the wharf, where, and on the rigging of the adjacent vessels, thousands were congregated to witness our departure, a reverend gentleman offered a prayer for the safe and speedy guidance of our little craft over the trackless waters. On concluding, he turned to our captain, who was a regular down-easter from the "Bay state," and though a good fellow, was something of an original, and expressed the hope that he who held the winds and waves, would guide our vessel to her port. To this the captain, with a most serio-comic expression of face, replied, that he guessed there would be no danger about that! The solemnity which seemed to pervade the assembly vanished at this odd speech, and a shout of laughter arose on all sides, the reverend gentleman himself not being proof against the infection; in the midst of which we bade adieu to friends, slipped our cable, and dropped down the stream. Cheer on cheer greeted us, as the tide bore us past the wharves, which of course was returned with due strength of lungs. We had no sooner got fairly under way, than a signal from the shore, and the appearance of two boats rapidly rowing after us, induced the captain to take in his sails, and cast anchor about midway between the city and Fort McHenry.

We soon ascertained that two passengers, whose luggage was already on board, were absent, and in about half an hour the gentlemen themselves climbed over the side of the vessel, nervous and excited at the prospect of being left, but rejoiced that they were now happily on board. Very little time elapsed before we were again under way, and sailed till two o'clock the following morning, when, owing to the slight wind, and the quantity of floating ice, which with the strong current was driving us astern, we cast anchor a second time. Towards morning, however, we had a fine breeze from a favorable quarter, which carried us outside the capes in magnificent style. We passed Cape Henry about eleven o'clock, and that afternoon and evening, and the following day, the pale faces, and sad, dejected, vinegar-like visages of most of the passengers, told but too plainly the tale, that a heavy sea and stiff breeze were exacting their accustomed dues from fresh water sailors, and oblations, powerful, heaving and running over, were poured out at the shrine of Neptune! To one, who like the writer, was so fortunate as to escape the inexorable *grip* of the old sea-dog, it was ludicrous in the extreme to observe the scenes around him. A group would probably be seen, laughing and talking most joyously at the misfortunes of another, who was faithfully performing his painful duty over the side of the vessel, when suddenly a mighty wave would heave her on its crest, and as she plunged forward, the aforesaid group would be hurled pell-mell to the opposite side, and as they arose from their fallen state, hurriedly seizing hold of the first object that presented, would lean forward in apparently the most abject and devout manner, and offer their own sacrifice at the shrine they had hitherto ridiculed and contemned!

We were now fairly out of sight of land, and it became an object of some interest and importance to know *whither* we should go. In the discussion which ensued among those whom exemption or recovery from seasickness permitted to take a part therein, of course, considerable diversity of opinion prevailed. It was urged by some opposed to the routes through Mexico, that if we went by the way of Vera Cruz, we would be subjected to a quarantine of fifteen or twenty days, from the fact of our having sailed from a port in the United States but two hundred miles distant from where the cholera was then prevailing, or even if we could be so fortunate as to evade this Mexican regulation, the authorities at Vera Cruz would never permit an armed party of fifty Americans to pass through their territory to the Pacific; and if we determined upon the norther nor Rio Grande route, we would not only have the difficulties of bad roads, wretched accommodations, and a long travel through snow and almost impassable barriers in the mountains to contend with, but be subjected to the annoyances of roving bands of Camanches and Apaches, or predatory hordes of Mexican banditti, and that the bones of more than half our number would be left to bleach by the way. These were disheartening anticipations truly, but insufficient of themselves to deter us from pursuing either of the routes proposed, had it not been further urged by those who professed to know, that it would consume much more time to pass through Mexico to Acapulco or Mazatlan, where probably no vessel could be found to carry us up the Pacific, than it would to proceed to Chagres, cross the Isthmus to Panama, and there meet one of the steamers, which a few weeks previously had left the United States

to ply as mail-boats between that point and Astoria, or at least be enabled to charter a sailing vessel direct for San Francisco. After duly considering these different routes, and despite the dismal stories published in some of the New York newspapers in regard to the hazardous and almost impracticable passage across the Isthmus of Darien, this latter was eventually determined upon as the least objectionable and most expeditious. This was the grand point—speed, speed; for in the fever of excitement which swept through the land, following the publication of official documents in relation to the wonderful discoveries in our recently acquired territory of California, its magnificent agricultural resources, where nature, with a bounteous hand profusely scattered her rich fruits and vegetable products; its delicious climate and bland atmosphere, which always brought the roses to the cheek, where disease was never known, but blessed with health, man lived beyond his allotted time in less favored climes; its vast mineral wealth, where gold and other precious metals were picked up with scarcely an effort, so that immense fortunes were accumulated in a few weeks, produced such a perfect *furor* in the public mind, that most were eager to "take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts," in the midst of this earthly Paradise. Our little band did not plead exemption from the prevailing fever, and as rapid change of air to this new Italian clime was important as a curative agent, the route by Chagres was deemed the shortest and best, and agreeing to pay the skipper an additional fifty dollars, and any extra port charges he might incur by this change of destination, he was directed by the charterers of his vessel to steer for Chagres, and endeavor to reach that point with as little delay as possible. Obeying the injunction, he *piled on* the canvass, and as a fresh breeze was blowing off Hatteras, with occasional showers, we flew through the water at the rate of ten knots. It was a cheering sight to watch the graceful movements of our little craft as she bounded over the waves, under the additional influence thus imparted to her motions, and to reflect that a few days of such rapid sailing would carry us beyond the influence of the rude northern blasts we were now experiencing, to the more genial meridian of sunny climes and cloudless skies. Soon, however, we had to seek shelter below from a passing shower, where, huddled together in what we termed the "cargo part" of our vessel, the cabin only being large enough for about half a dozen at one time, pleasing thoughts were indulged, and congratulations went round, at the prospect that now presented of a speedy termination of our voyage, when, suddenly, we were startled from our quiet and agreeable reflections by the terrific cry of *a man overboard*. Quick as thought we sprang upon deck, and rushed to the side of the vessel. Eagerly and anxiously every man looked to see that his friend was near. All were there; but it was too true that a man, a fine old jack tar belonging to the schooner, was overboard, for we could plainly see him grappling for life with the heaving billows. He was engaged in some duty on the bowsprit, when the vessel made a plunge, and a towering wave at the same moment rolled over and washed him from his insecure and unstable footing. Awful, indeed, was the scene, and harrowing to the feelings, to look upon a human being in the last agonies, straining every muscle to sustain himself, with his eyeballs nearly starting from their

sockets, as he perceived from the wild careering of the waves, in which a small boat could not for a moment have lived, and our rapid flight from the spot, the inevitable fate that awaited him. An attempt was immediately made to round the vessel to, but being constructed with a sliding keel, which was drawn up to facilitate her progress, and under a heavy press of canvass, with a high sea running, she refused to obey the helm, and the captain shrieked, rather than called, to "put down that centre board," the accomplishment of which order at once brought her to, and we returned to the scene of the disaster, when chairs, hen coops and other articles, were thrown overboard, in the hope that they might catch the eye of the drowning man, and be seized upon till other aid could be afforded him, but all in vain. I saw his cap for a moment float past on the top of a wave, but its hapless owner was gone; the strong man had perished and sunk to rise no more. It was a peculiarly sad and melancholy scene, and for a time cast a deep gloom over our otherwise joyous and, in some respects, rather thoughtless party. We had enjoyed most prosperous breezes, with nothing of import occurring to mar the pleasant memory of our voyage, till we witnessed the fearful event of a human being in full health dying before our eyes, without our having the power to save him. It struck me afterwards that many on board were deeply impressed by it, and that it was a means and a powerful one, of inducing serious reflections, by exhibiting to us our helpless and dependent condition. The event I can never forget, nor the lesson it teaches.

The morning following this melancholy event, was ushered in by alternate sunshine and shower, fair winds and a milder atmosphere. Instead of being compelled to bear the burden of two or three overcoats to keep off the chilling northern blasts we have felt ever since our departure, we were now glad to dispense with all; and the succeeding day, which was the Sabbath, opened magnificently, the very *beau ideal* of a calm summer morning. The wind which hitherto had been "most favorable for our business," as the captain termed it, had now subsided. The sails flapped heavily against the masts. The sun shone from a cloudless sky. All nature seemed hushed to repose, for all was calm, serene, and beautiful. Sea-sickness was no longer felt, but all lounged lazily on deck, thinking or speaking of the loved ones at home.

> "How sweet it is to tell the listening air
> The name beloved."

We usually had morning and evening service on board, conducted by the Rev. Dr. ——, and to-day he favored us with a good discourse, sustaining his positions with much cogent reasoning and many forcible illustrations, which seemed to be appreciated by most, and apparently produced happy results.

During the sermon, our captain, who was not invariably very choice in his expressions, was an attentive listener, and in a part more than usually interesting and pungent, he saw, or affected to see, something wrong in the top-sails, and called out to one of his men in a loud whisper, which, not being fully understood, he repeated the order to "clew down that fore top-sail" in the same tone, and loud enough to be heard this time, when accompanied by the distinctive expletive of "darn

your eyes." The minister was at the moment discoursing on the sin of swearing, and the effect produced was truly ludicrous.

As evening approached, the wind entirely died away, and our vessel rolled heavily in the trough of the sea. We all sat upon deck, enjoying the delicious calmness of an almost tropical night. In truth the day and evening were of that *dreamy* kind I had often fancied and read of, as pertaining to an ocean life in southern climes, but had never realized till now.

A fine breeze sprang up about nine o'clock, and the atmosphere was so mild and bracing, the deep azure vault with its many twinkling stars so pure and beautiful, and altogether the scene so enchanting, that it seemed a luxury to live, and I sat to a late hour enjoying it, and watching the sparkling waters, as our little vessel fairly danced and leaped from wave to wave. We were now in the same track followed by Columbus, when in 1492, with the Pinta, Nina and Santa Maria, he explored the vasty deep for the discovery of a new world.

The heat continued to increase as we approached Cuba, but favoring winds still sped us on our way. Innumerable flying fish were seen, sporting through the air around our vessel, and suddenly disappearing in their more natural element. Many flew across the deck, and occasionally would strike the masts or rigging and fall on board. Two beautiful tropical birds, denominated by sailors "skim-o'er-the-seas," were also observed, and a "man-of-war falcon" silently poised above, watching intently for an opportunity to pounce upon his prey.

On the morning of the 24th, the man at the mast-head called out "land, ho!" "Where away?" "Off the weather bow." We soon came near enough to have a view of it from the deck, and ran down the "Caicos passage," between the "Caicos banks," the land seen, and "Mariguana Island." The sun was intensely hot, but a pleasant breeze tempered his fervor, and soon launched us into the Caribbean Sea. We were now fairly in the trade winds, which for the last few days had made our progress very rapid, and were literally flying through, or rather over the waters, for our little craft rode the waves like a duck.

It was but eight days since our departure, and in that brief time we had indeed come with the speed of the winds. Every thing had gone on prosperously without, while the utmost harmony and good fellowship prevailed on board. And I think it worthy of remark, that though we had among us persons of dissimilar tastes, of various pursuits and dispositions, and from opposite sections of the United States and from Europe, most until recently strangers to each other, yet entire unanimity of sentiment existed, so that the comfort and welfare of one was the comfort and welfare of all. A solitary event alone would occasionally intrude itself, casting a shadow over the otherwise agreeable picture; but even the loss of the poor sailor, which at the time of its occurrence forcibly brought to mind the beautiful lines—

> "Come, mariner, down in the deep with me,
> And hie thee under the wave," &c.,

doubtless in the inscrutable providence of God was designed to effect some wise purpose, which our limited capacities were unable to comprehend.

About three o'clock in the afternoon all was confusion on deck. A squall was approaching, known by a peculiar sound in the air, the singularly white appearance on the horizon and in the surrounding atmosphere, with the lurid and portentous clouds above. The captain was rapidly giving his orders to take in sail and be prepared to meet the blow. It soon came on with heavy rain, but was of brief continuance, as its fury was spent some distance from us on the broad ocean, and we felt little more than the angry lashing of the waves, and the thump, thump of the surging sea. Before evening all was stilled to nearly a dead calm, and a starry night appeared with the new moon just visible, and a few murky looking clouds went muttering by, but soon disappeared, leaving a warm and delicious atmosphere.

"'Twas one of those ambrosial eves
A day of storm so often leaves."

We passed the island of Ineagua during the storm, seen from the masthead some distance off.

On the morning of the 25th, by daybreak, we sailed through the "Windward Passage," dividing Cuba from St. Domingo, and though twenty miles distant from the latter, such is the pure transparency of the atmosphere, that we could plainly perceive the bold outline of the coast and mountainous character of the interior, and almost distinguish objects on the beach. Cuba was too far to the westward to enable us to see it. We continued to sail along the west end of San Domingo most of the day, and approached much nearer to it, affording us a fine view of the rich green verdure of the island; and as the air was occasionally wafted to us from the shore, it was redolent with the perfume of tropical plants, like "spicy gales from Araby the blest."

A terrific explosion occurred to-day, which for a time caused great consternation, lest the quantity of powder we had on board had taken fire, and would blow the "Sovereign" clear out of the water. Two persons were wounded by the accident, while another who was sitting on the "infernal machine" was blown into the air, and a fourth was knocked down and deluged with a vast sluice of—ale! In other words, the captain's ale barrel, albeit unused to the tossing and heat we had latterly experienced, burst its bounds, blowing out the head and spigot, which touched two persons *slightly*, awfully frightening another who at the moment was sitting on the cask, and knocking another down from mere fright, almost drowning him in ale! The whole scene was rich and amusing, and afforded us a fund of merriment for some time.

At night most of the passengers were as usual on deck, some watching the incessant play of lightning over the rapidly receding heights of San Domingo, as we flew by its south-western extremity, and others singing, or dancing, to the inspiring strains of a violin. All was beautiful around. The soft breeze in these latitudes so truely delicious, gently rippled the water, and the stars shone forth from the pure deep blue sky with a lustre only known in the transparent atmosphere of the tropics, while our little craft herself, as if in harmony with the brilliant scene, appeared scarcely to touch the waves, as gayly and blithely, with hardly a perceptible motion, she swept over the wide waste of waters.

We passed the Island of Jamaica in the night, and in the course of

the day a brig crossed our bows, but not within hailing distance. By way of a demonstration, most of our party armed themselves with swords, pistols and cutlasses, and disposed about the deck and on the rattlings, presented quite a formidable appearance. One redoubtable "Colonel," armed with an enormous rapier, was accoutred in full uniform. An immense blunderbuss was now fired, which completed the illusion, for our neighbor, evidently apprehensive of encountering a pirate, formerly of such frequent occurrence in these latitudes, as cheer on cheer went up from our decks and shrouds, quickly put on a heavy press of canvass and bore rapidly away. A short time thereafter, we had a view of three ships .and a brig at once, which presented a most animated picture. We soon bade adieu to them, and were again with no object in view, save the unceasing roll of waters beneath and the bright heavens above us.

As we approached the termination of our voyage, the daily addition to old Sol's rays made the heat enervating and oppressive, but the thought of our coming mule-ride across the Isthmus, and the sights we should there witness, imparted an energy and joyous anticipation, which greatly contributed to sustain our flagging spirits.

The number of sharks which infest this sea is truly astonishing. They could be seen in all dircctions, sporting around our vessel or following in her wake. By way of variety, and to relieve the monotony we were beginning to experience, many of our party engaged in the exciting sport of catching these monsters of the deep. Two enormous hooks, with their baits, were quickly snapped asunder, but a third was more successful. It was interesting to watch his evolutions before the bait was seized. He would swim round it several times, gradually lessening the circle, till it was nearly within his grasp, when, suddenly turning on his side, he made a plunge at it, and was soon secured. He proved to be nearly eight feet long, and was a perfect monster, as the ankles of many could testify, when they approached too near, as he floundered about and lashed the deck with his tail.

The playful little flying-fish, too, were observed in great numbers, together with the beautiful little nautili, or Portuguese men-of-war, which, having the most perfect little pink sails standing above the water and spread to the breeze, enable them to slide along in fine style. From the gelatinous, pellucid body of the animal, a slender fibre or cable is dependent, armed with minute prickles, which possessing a contractile power, will jar and benumb the hand, if touched, with the force of an electric shock, so provident is nature in furnishing means of protection and defence, even for these little skimmers of the ocean.

At twelve o'clock on the morning of the 29th, the cheering cry of "land, ho!" was heard from the "look out" at the mast-head, and in a little time thereafter, the towering peaks and densely wooded plains of the far-famed but much dreaded Isthmus of Darien, were plainly visible from our deck. We continued to cruise along the coast the greater part of the day, admiring the magnificent landscape,

"——that mighty chain
Of mountains, stretching on from east to west,
So massive, yet so shadowy, so etherial,"

and the profuse vegetation which nature here delights to scatter with a lavish hand.

Shortening sail as evening approached, we continued in the same course, and as night drew on dark and lowering, we could distinctly hear the breakers, with a deep hollow moan, resounding along the beach, and felt the influence of a heavy "ground swell," which tossed, and pitched, and tumbled our little craft at a furious rate. Many were terribly alarmed at the critical situation they imagined they were in, and life-preservers were soon brought into requisition and fastened round the body, to be prepared for the fatal plunge if she should strike,

"And roll a complete wreck
At mercy of the waves—"

Our captain, however, who proved himself a superior sailor and a man of excellent judgment in nautical affairs, regardless of all around, steadily held his way till he arrived at a suitable position, when the order to "let go the anchor" was given, and our little vessel swung with a jerk, quivered for a moment, and stood, safely moored off the harbor of Chagres.

And now a shout went up that made the welkin ring, while guns, pistols, rifles, and blunderbusses, were fired in such quick succession, that fifty lights soon gleamed from the shore, in a vain endeavor to ascertain the meaning of all this waste of breath and powder.

In the morning we found ourselves directly opposite the town. The harbor itself is a small but good one, for vessels of from a hundred and fifty to two hundred tons, being protected by hills on all sides, and toward the ocean by a bold, beetling cliff, jutting out into the sea, on the summit of which towers the antique, venerable and picturesque, but now dilapidated castle of San Lorenzo, and at its very base flows the channel or entrance to the town. Some who had preceded us, did not appear to have been aware of this important fact, and in endeavoring to effect a passage, had steered too far to the right of this entrance, and were grounded and wrecked by the breakers, which here dash furiously on the beach. Four vessels—two brigs and two schooners—were lying there stranded, from a want of this requisite knowledge on the part of their commanders.

Our captain, who had never before visited Chagres, here displayed his superior seamanship and calm, correct judgment, for instead of dashing through as others had done, in what appeared the widest part of the entrance, thus risking the loss of his vessel and probably the lives of his passengers, he stood off and on for some time, till he was satisfied of the condition of things, and where he must steer to make a safe harbor. He was on the point of entering the channel as described, when he observed the steamer Orus coming out directly through the passage, and lay to till she came alongside. The questions whether we had any sickness on board, where from, length of time out, and number of passengers, being satisfactorily answered, we made fast to her and were towed in.

CHAPTER II.

Chagres.—Natives.—Their Indolence.—Effects of Climate.—Fertility.—Start for Gorgona.—Native Boatmen.—Profuse Vegetation.—Beautiful Scenery.—Uproar and Confusion.—Packing in Canoes.—Night Scene on Chagres River.—A Sick Man.—Brilliant Morning.—Alligators.—Breakfast.—Hot Ride.—Arrive at Gorgona.—Avaricious Natives.—Pandemonium.—Start for Panama.—A Mule Ride across the Isthmus of Darien.—Beautiful Sunset.—Arrive at Panama.

The first thing which struck our wondering gaze on entering Chagres, was its bee-hive appearance. It is a strange, fantastic, and oddish-looking town, situated in a deep, dark hollow or cove. It consists of some forty or fifty huts, with pointed palm-thatched roofs, and reed walls. Nor were the innumerable buzzards which were flying about or resting on the houses, together with the energetic gesticulation of the natives when in conversation, as we drew near, at all calculated to lessen the picturesque effect of a first view. The surrounding country was any thing but devoid of interest and beauty. All had a strange, equatorial look; while the green hills around, clothed with rich tropical verdure, and the graceful and shadowy palm and cocoanut, with other strangef antastic trees, together with the ruins of the large old Spanish castle, on the heights above the town, gave to the scenery a very beautiful and picturesque aspect.

Most of us were soon ashore and rambling through the town. We landed at the beach on some logs, which during the rainy season are necessary to preserve the pedestrian from a quagmire, in the midst of dense foliage that was here luxuriant to the water's edge, surrounded by about thirty canoes and some forty or fifty huge black fellows, mostly in the garb in which nature arrayed them. We passed on beneath a burning sun, which in the shade brought the thermometer to 90° of Fahrenheit. A majority of the natives are black, but some are of a deep copper or mulatto color. The thick lips and woolly head of the African; the high cheek-bones, straight hair, and dogged look of the Indian; and the more chiseled features and finely expressive eyes of the Spaniard, are all here, though often so blended, that it is difficult to say to which race they chiefly owe their origin. In truth they are a mongrel race, but generally have the most magnificent, large, dark, expressive eyes I have ever seen. These, when in conversation, which is almost continual, they use to some purpose, while the incessant rapid clatter of their tongues, and their violent gesticulations and grimaces, are often quite ludicrous. The females, some of whom have rather pretty faces and particularly fine eyes, were dressed out in the most tawdry finery, with divers furbelows, flounces, and ruffles, encircling the shoulders, where the dress begins, and terminating somewhere about or below the knee. Some of the younger ones were entirely *model artiste*, at least so far as their clothing was concerned, but the forms of most were rather

indifferent. Many were sitting or lounging about the doors or in the cabins, eating tamarinds, oranges, and other fruit, surrounded by hairless dogs, pigs, naked children, turkey-buzzards, and some other *little* live-stock, forming altogether quite a congruous and homogeneous mixture.

In a country like this, where the temperature is so nearly alike throughout the year, there is a natural tendency to indolence and sloth, and it is remarkable what an influence the climate exerts on the character of the people. Here nature with a bounteous hand spontaneously fructifies the earth, and the natives, with few wants to supply, pluck the fruit and are satisfied; and with few necessities for enterprise and industry, such is their love of indolence, that all the charms of existence appear to consist in dreaming away life in quiet and repose. Basking beneath a tropical sun, or listlessly reclining on nature's downy couch, days—years—are passed in drowsy languor and supine sloth.

But the influx of men from rougher climes and bleaker regions will probably exercise a salutary influence, by showing them the advantages of industry and patient toil. Already they begin to perceive this, to some extent, and though such dear lovers of money, that in closing a bargain they will jabber their *patois* or bad Spanish with uncouth gesticulations for half a day, the majority of them are unwilling to make any extra bodily effort to procure it; but when persuaded by liberal offers to undertake a task, it is astonishing with what dogged perseverance they will often pursue it, what weights they can support, and what toil they can endure.

Returning from our ramble, we were eager to pursue our journey, and witness the yet unknown wonders before us. We therefore dispensed with all committees, and gladly availing ourselves of the proposition made by the captain of the Orus, to carry us to Gorgona, a distance of fifty miles up the Chagres river, partly on his vessel, and the remaining distance by canoes, at the rate of ten dollars apiece, we prepared for departure on the following day.

On the 31st of January therefore, we started, with fourteen canoes fastened to the stern of the vessel, each having from three to five native boatmen on board, and it was truly a wild and exciting spectacle. Many of the canoes, from the rapid motion and swell caused by the steamer, shipped a good deal of water occasionally, and at such times the savage shrieks of the boatmen, their vociferations and constant jabbering produced a chaos beyond the power of pen to describe. The whole scene was singular, strange, wild, and romantic.

The banks of the river, as we swept around their abrupt and frequent curves, were very beautiful. Here were all the splendid and gorgeous tropical plants and trees to be seen, growing with all the luxuriance in which nature delights in this latitude. The pomegranate, the tamarind, the date, the plantain, the banana, the cocoanut, the orange, the lime, the citron, the pineapple, were scattered around in rich profusion, while the air was laden with sweets, and the senses were almost oppressed by the fragrance emitted from flowers of every hue. At one place we noticed a grove of orange-trees, as heavily laden with its large luscious fruit as any apple-orchard we had seen in the the United States, during the past very prolific summer there. There was a grandeur and beauty in the scenery that was truly enchanting.

Here immense hills or mountains, rearing their summits to the clouds, would suddenly burst upon the view, as we swept by the short turns in the river; while, on the other hand, peaceful smiling valleys would present, all uncultivated, but clad with a gorgeous livery of foliage, and with flowers of every imaginable tint. The festoons, draperies, and trellis-work of vines, as they clung from tree to tree for miles in extent along the margin of the stream, presented a most graceful and attractive sight. Birds too, of rich and varied plumage, having most sweet and liquid notes, made the landscape vocal with their songs; while the chattering macaws, parrots, and paroquets, with an occasional whistle or peculiar call of the monkeys and marmosets, as they could be seen playing among the dense foliage, or on the tops of the tall and feathery palm and cocoanut trees, gave additional interest to the animated and truly magnificent scene. I thought of the fabled Arcadian groves and bowers, where Pan and his attendant sylphs and satyrs reveled, and of the romantic and improbable stories of the Arabian Nights, which had charmed me in early boyhood; but here were scenes and prospects far surpassing any, that the wildest flight of the imagination could conceive. It was a perfect fairy-land.

In the afternoon the Orus ran aground, and was unable to proceed further, being entirely too long for the abrupt curvatures of the river. We therefore prepared for disembarkation into the canoes, which were to carry us thirty-five miles higher up the stream to Gorgona, and such a scene of confusion and Babel-like jabbering, I never witnessed. These Granadian darkies generally speak their patois of Indian and Spanish so rapidly, all at once, and with such ridiculous antics and violent gesticulation, that the noise and turmoil created by the disembarkation of our baggage beggars all description.

As every thing must have an end, this at length was happily accomplished, and now behold us about nine o'clock at night, all snugly packed away, baggage included, in fifteen canoes. Slowly we wended our course up stream, propelled by the poles of our natural but greasy-looking boatmen, one or more being stationed at either side of the bow and one at the stern. This change was agreeable in one respect, for we were now relieved from the ceaseless clatter of tongues to which for the last five hours we had been most impatient listeners. But though freed from that annoyance, another nearly as unbearable, awaited us in our canoes, for I can assure my reader, that apart from the fleas, which were numerous, I never passed a more uncomfortable night. Four of us, with our baggage, occupied one canoe, and were compelled to lie down under our closely-thatched covering mostly on top of each other, without the ability to stretch our nether limbs lower than at right angles with the body, while the heat would perhaps have boiled an egg! Some of our party sadly complained of their night's lodging, but most seemed to bear it cheerfully, as our voyage was expected to terminate by the evening of the following day.

These canoes are of various dimensions, some being sufficiently capacious for six persons to sit down, with a little tight packing, under the rounded palm-leaf covering, while others are only large enough to contain two, three, or four persons. If there was the least enterprise or industry about this people, they would have constructed better and

more commodious vessels before this time, and made traveling endurable on the Chagres river.

After *poling* about three hours, our boatmen drew up to the shore, at twelve o'clock, where we remained till four in the morning, nor would promises, bribes, or threats, induce them to stir till then. We were soon joined by many others of the party, and crawling out of our dens, we quickly built up a huge fire on the sand, to keep off the prowling wild beasts and venomous serpents which abound, and to disperse the myriads of insects with which the air was teeming. The moon shone brilliantly, and the wild appearance of the surrounding scenery, with our companions standing or sitting about the sparkling fire, having pistols and cutlasses in their belts, presented a most startling and brigand-like look, which the painter's pencil alone could adequately portray.

A worthy member of the party, having all the horror of Chagres fever, cholera, or some other more dire disease reveling in his fancy, presented himself to me, and complained of being very ill, pressing his sides with a most woe-begone look. I prepared him a slight palliative, which in his eager and terrified haste, he swallowed so quickly that it was at once rejected, apparently confirming his worst apprehensions. He again came to me and asked if I thought he could survive the attack. Finding that he was very nervous, the effect of long abstinence, for we had not eaten since morning, and the prostrating heat of the canoe, a glass of good old cogniac and a dry biscuit, together with a hearty laugh from his companions at his gloomy fears, soon restored his wonted equilibrium, and with it his witty but good-natured sallies. It was an instance of dread of disease, almost producing the thing apprehended.

When this little matter was disposed of, I returned to the canoe, and imagined that I slept, but will not be *positively certain* whether it was imagination or reality, but when I again peeped out, we were moving onward, and

> "Day glimmered in the east, and the white moon
> Hung like a vapor in the cloudless sky."

Cooped up in our little pen, we were unable to witness the ushering in of the brilliant morning, except through the interstices of our palm-leaf covering, but the hum of insects, the song of birds, and the gay profusion of plants, flowers, and trees, absorbed every sense in admiration of the new and varied pictures constantly presenting. On the banks of the river less innocent objects were to be seen. I counted in the space of one mile, as we floated by in our canoes, six immense alligators, basking in the hot sun, the odd hammering sounds they gave forth strangely echoing along the shores. Some of these were at least eight feet in length, and truly horrid-looking creatures. When disturbed by our approach, or a bullet fired at their impervious coating, they would drag their huge and ungainly figures forward, with head erect, and at a slow pace, gradually slide into the water. One of the party observed a tiger-cat, beautifully spotted, drinking at the margin of the stream, but before he could prepare for a shot, it became alarmed, and quickly disappeared in the thicket.

About ten o'clock we were urgently admonished of the necessity of attending to our creature-comforts, and the *patrone*, as the steersman or

captain is termed, gladly stopped by our direction at a hut we noticed on the bank. These people we found always ready to pause by the way, but it was difficult to start them; we therefore kept them going ahead as long as possible at one time. Here we managed to procure coffee without milk or cream, though we saw a number of cows near by, which, with boiled eggs and a little addition from our own provender, afforded a tolerably comfortable meal. The senora who waited on us was rather pretty, and of a much lighter hue than most we had seen at Chagres, plainly revealing her Spanish origin. She was so much occupied in attending to our wants, and our frequent calls for *café*, as to be unable to look after other domestic duties, and her little infant was left to cry most lustily in a hammock close by. I took up the naked child to pacify it, which I quickly succeeded in doing, and received a most gracious look from the mother, with the oft-repeated *muchas gracias, señor*.

Whilst here, we had a favorable opportunity to view and admire the beautiful landscape, wondering that the strange and worthless set of beings living here in thatched huts, should neglect the culture of such prolific soil, and appear so apathetic in regard to the magnificent prospects presented on every hand.

We paid our *dos réales* apiece, and departed. Slowly moving forward, we passed the rest of the day beneath our awning of palms, with a baking sun pouring his fervid rays upon us, and by six o'clock in the evening welcomed the long-expected town of Gorgona.

Most of the party arrived by ten o'clock that night, and here another scene of tumult and confusion arose; I was glad to be rid of this by ascending the high bank on which the town is situated, and walking to the Alcalde's who kept the American and Spanish Hotel, if the wretched accommodations one there receives, will allow the old shanty to be dignified with such a title. Here I engaged a bed for the night and ordered supper, to which those of us who had not pitched our tents did ample justice, albeit we could say nothing commendatory of the knowledge these people displayed in the culinary art, garlic or onions entering into most of their compounds. Gorgona we found about on a par with Chagres, and one or two other little towns we passed on the river, though in a much more healthy locality. It is built in the same manner and with similar materials, while its inhabitants are "chips of the old block." Nor could I anywhere discover much to interest in these natives. Their filthy habits and obscene exhibitions, their indolence and ignorance, and their perfect submission to the priests, who here rule supreme, were calculated rather to excite the sentiments of disgust and pity than any other feeling. I must say, however, in extenuation, that they appeared in the main, to be a simple-minded, honest, and in most respects, a temperate people, though instances to the contrary of these virtues were not wanting. The number of foreigners who are now traveling, and will continue to pass through their territory, will have the effect of sharpening their wits, and probably present temptations to which they have hitherto been strangers. Already they begin to manifest considerable adroitness in driving a bargain, and occasionally have not scrupled to fly from it when closed, under some flimsy plea, and unblushingly to make more extortionate demands. An instance of this came under our notice.

We made arrangements with our host to have five mules, at six dollars apiece, ready for us by daylight on the following morning, a committee of that number of persons having been appointed to proceed at once to Panama, and secure passage up the Pacific for the whole party. To recruit for the toilsome journey we retired as soon as possible, but the horrible clatter of cracked bells and broken tin-pans, the barking of dogs, squealing of pigs, and crying of children, together with the untiring gabble and vociferations of the natives, kept up the greater part of the night such unearthly sounds, that we seemed to be in *Pandemonium*. Sleep was effectually banished from our eyelids.

> "Thus passed the night so foul, till morning fair
> Came forth."

We arose from cot and hammock, flea-bitten, and but little refreshed, though ready to start on what we deemed our perilous journey across the Isthmus. Hour after hour elapsed, till the most pleasant part of the day was gone, and the sun shone with torrid fervor; but still our mules were not ready, our host keeping them back, as we afterwards learned, to obtain a higher rate. Annoyed beyond endurance at the delay, and the tardy movements of the worthless set around us, we scoured the town, and at length succeeded in obtaining four miserable-looking little animals at eight dollars apiece. Another was still wanting, and, by an offer of ten dollars, I at length succeeded in getting a tolerably good one. Though so wretched in appearance, we found these animals capable of great endurance.

Glad that the vexatious and irritating events of the morning, which the cupidity and dogged laziness of these slothful mongrels had produced, were happily ended, we hastily swallowed a cup of bad coffee, handed by a damsel nearly *nude*, and, mounting our *Rosinantes*, we started at a brisk canter, beneath a broiling sun, while our *guido*, all stripped and on foot, trotted off in advance.

For the first mile, the way was very pleasant over a nearly level plain, at the termination of which there were stronger indications of rougher riding, for we soon began to descend a nearly perpendicular precipice, the only pass, down which was a narrow mule-way, where, step by step, these animals had worn a passage, over rocks, loose stones, sand, and mud. We at length reached the bottom of the ravine, and, crossing a brook, which in some parts was a wide and deep chasm, we commenced a toilsome ascent on the opposite side, over a similar path-way, surrounded by scenery of wild and unknown plants and trees, on the mountain and glen, through whose dense foliage a breath could scarcely penetrate. The fervent atmosphere produced an almost stifling sensation, while the deathlike silence that reigned throughout, disturbed only by the audible footfall of our animals, as we slowly wound around the tortuous ascent, made the journey peculiarly toilsome and solitary.

What must have been the sensations of Balboa, when, centuries ago, he crossed this very path, over a narrow isthmus, uniting two continents, and dividing two oceans, the verge of whose mighty waters swept the shores of the Eastern and Western world?

For the first few miles I followed closely at the heels of our guide,

and would often pause and turn to examine the apparently almost impassible route I had traversed, watch the progress of the rest of the party, and wonder at the security with which their cautiously-stepping and sagacious animals would gradually overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. These mustangs and mules, early trained to travel "in the wild mountain track," are capable of great endurance, and certainly possess much more knowledge than most of their riders, when exercised upon what they consider the safest and surest stepping-place, and best mode of proceeding. I urged mine repeatedly, to make him choose a path, which to all appearance was preferable to his own, but to no purpose. He would turn half round, and in a slow, solemn way, put his nose to the ground, and looking keenly about the place, would cautiously put one foot forward, then another, then a third and a fourth, when, poised on all drawn under him, and close together, he would have a better opportunity for further inspection, which having satisfactorily accomplished, another equally deliberate and cautious step would be made as before, down what, to all appearance, was an impracticable route, and so on, until the difficulty was overcome. Finding that he knew so much better than I did, how, where, and when he ought to travel, I invariably threw the reins to him, when hazardous passes or other obstacles were to be surmounted. The result was always fortunate. One or two of the party, however, were satisfied that "horses should not have their own way," and whipped and spurred theirs to such an extent, to compel compliance with their better judgment, that the issue was as I had anticipated. One was thrown over his horse's head into a mud puddle, and the other, with horse and all, stuck fast in a quagmire, from which it was not easy to extricate him. Should these lines ever meet the eye of those worthy gentlemen, I trust they will pardon the liberty I have taken in recording here their feats of muleship. It is true that mine stumbled on some loose stones once or twice, in descending hills, and my efforts alone with the reins saved both him and me from a fall; but for unmistakeable judgment in traversing these perilous mountain-passes, I must admit he proved himself the better of the two.

Thus we trudged on, often over difficult, and sometimes dangerous ways. Occasionally we would have to go up or down, as the case might be, for nearly half a mile at one time, through a chasm or sluice, probably worn in the mountains by the torrents of water that descend during the rainy season. These gully-holes are often ten and fifteen feet deep throughout their entire extent, and the passes are so narrow, as barely to admit of one horse or mule passing through at a time; the rider, to avoid a severe contusion, or probably a broken limb, in turning the sharp angles, being compelled to place his feet as near the animal's head as possible, and in this manner he can ride in perfect safety, though some little management is requisite to maintain an equilibrium. Before entering these defiles, the muleteers shout at the top of their voices, and stop for a short time, continuing the shouting as they advance, to apprize others at the opposite extremity of the pass, that the way is already occupied. This is necessary and important, for if two on horseback were to meet

in one of these narrow but crooked paths, the scene between the Quaker and Dandy would have to be re-enacted, for many newspapers would have to be read, and many segars smoked, before either could turn out of the way for his neighbor.

Continuing on, we passed two or three *hackalas* or huts by the way, and after several brief but pleasant stoppages at the various brooks and mountain-rills, we at length came out on a beautiful undulating meadow, where picturesque villas and shadowy trees decked the verdant plain, and soon thereafter the towers of Panama were in view. The sun was just setting as we entered the suburbs, and a flood of purple glory rested on the sky, reflected back by the sparkling waters of the Pacific, which brought the distant mountains into bolder relief, and cast a deeper shadow through the twilight groves. Half an hour's ride over the paved street, brought us to the city, which we entered at the "Gorgona gate," passing through a heavy stone-archway, supporting a cupola, in which hangs the alarm bell, surmounted by a cross. We stopped at the "Hotel Français" in the "Calle de San Filipe," rejoiced that the toil of our mountain travel was over, and that we had at length reached the shores of the Pacific.

CHAPTER III.

Engage passage for San Francisco.—British bark "John Ritson."—Arrangements and Accommodations.—Appointed Surgeon.—Send for Friends.—Devout Catholics.—Description of Panama.—Picturesque Ruins.—Romantic Shower-Bath.—Priests.—Effects of Separation from Spain.—Markets.—Fruits.—Panama Fever.—Its cause.—How avoided.—Arrival of Friends.—Critical Situation.—Adieu to Panama.—Pelicans.—Fishes.—Joyous Anticipations.—Anchor off Taboga.—Beauty of the Pearl Islands.

Arrived at Panama, our first and most important duty was to obtain passage on one of the two vessels now in port, a British bark and an American ship, both bound for San Francisco. We were much disappointed in finding no steamer here. Having made an inspection of these, and ascertaining that the former would be the first to sail, we at once closed a bargain with the British Vice Consul, Mr. ——, for the seventeen cabin and forty-nine steerage vacancies on board the bark "John Ritson," Kennidy, master, to sail in ten days, at the rate of $200 for the former and $150 for the latter. There were about one hundred and fifty persons here, waiting a passage up the Pacific, but from tardiness, want of foresight, or some other cause, they had neglected to attend to the matter. We therefore stole a march on them, though they had been here for some time, and found no difficulty in disposing of our fourteen surplus tickets, after accommodating our own party. We were much indebted to the business tact of Mr. F——, one of our committee, in speedily effecting this desirable arrangement. It was stipulated that

the accommodations and provisions were to be of the best kind and ample for all. The only distinction to be made between the cabin and steerage passengers was, that the latter would not have wines furnished at their table, which, with ale, were to be liberally supplied to the former. I was at once installed a surgeon for the trip, by the Vice Consul, for which service a free passage was tendered me to San Francisco. The responsibility and pecuniary advantages of this post I shared with my worthy friend, the Rev. Doctor, on his arrival at Panama.

Having satisfactorily concluded these preliminaries, we at once dispatched a messenger, to apprise our friends at Gorgona of the progress made, and to hasten their departure thence. In the mean time, we were busily employed in inspecting all that was curious or interesting in this ancient seat of Spanish dominion.

Early on the Sunday morning following our arrival, I chanced to look through the door of my apartment opening to the front portico, and was surprised at beholding a crowd of men, women, and children, kneeling in the middle of the street. I soon discovered that, like devout Catholics, they were listening to their priests and performing their matins opposite an open sacristy attached to the venerable-looking cathedral standing across the way. In the afternoon these same people might be seen with a *rooster* under one or both arms, having gaffs on his spurs like knife-blades, hurrying through the city-gate to the scene of their festive rejoicing, alias cock-fighting, in which brutal sport they take great delight. I had not the desire to desecrate the Sabbath by witnessing this cruel exhibition. Wagers, I was informed, were staked at every round, the poor ignorant natives manifesting the most intense interest and excitement at the death of a bird, dancing round the ring or uttering horrid yells and vulgar Spanish oaths, as they happened to be the winners or losers. Gambling, too, of different kinds prevailed. Seated in a chair on the pavement, with his lay companion, I saw one of the Padres, *dressed in his canonical robes* and three-cornered hat,—playing cards! A very estimable gentleman, himself a catholic, informed me that these people, since their separation from the mother country, were not regarded by the catholics of Christendom as belonging to their sect, and that their practices should not be recognized as the established principles of the church, various innovations and abuses having crept in since that event, for which reproaches they had been excommunicated by the See of Rome.

The present Panama is an old-fashioned Spanish city, built more than a century ago, with massive stone-walls and a moat surrounding it on all sides. The original Panama, however, was situated about six miles distant. In the seventeenth century, Morgan, the celebrated Irish pirate, attacked the city, and driving out its inhabitants, sacked and burnt it, the crumbling ruins alone standing to tell its locality and sad fate. Its citizens, who now are the same mongrel race with those of Gorgona and Chagres, fled to this part of the Isthmus, and in process of time the Spanish government caused the present city of Panama to be built, though judging from the antique and dilapidated appearance of the houses and churches, it might have stood for ages. Most of these latter have a time-worn and venerable aspect. With thick vines growing over their decayed walls, and large shoots of evergreens thriving on the

topmost pinnacles of their towers, they present a most picturesque appearance. The streets are all paved, a duty performed by what is properly termed the "chain gang," composed of those who have committed offences against the laws. They are narrow, as well as the sidewalks, which have a flagstone pavement, and will barely suffice for two to walk abreast. The houses, consisting of wood and stone, with brick-tiled roofs, are two and three stories in height, each story having a portico or corridor stretching over the foot-way, which adds to the sombre appearance, closeness, and narrowness of the streets. They are a pleasant refuge, above or below, from the heat of the noonday sun, and afford a slight shelter to the pedestrian from the drenching rains which, from May or June till December, deluge the land. What is singular, nearly every house is a store or fancy-shop of some sort. In our rambles, we discovered a kind of confectionary near to the plaza, which we called by a familiar name at home, whither we sometimes resorted in the cool pleasant evenings, to partake of *agua tamarinda*, or tamarind-water, a most agreeable and beautiful beverage Continuing our stroll from thence to the battery, overlooking the bay, we would spend hours in enjoying the soft and balmy air of the ocean, lighted by the effulgent rays of a full-orbed moon. Occasionally we wandered through the ruins of the neighboring convents, whose crumbling walls, overgrown with moss and vines, were objects of deep and peculiar interest. The court-yard of one of these was our favorite resort for bathing, where, beneath a little thatched shed, with gourd in hand, we dipped the water from the oriental-looking jars, and enjoyed all the luxury of a shower. The well stood by from which we drew the water, and our little shady nook was screened from observation by the mass of foliage which even here, as elsewhere, grew with tropical profusion.

We met many priests in our walks, dressed in the black silk gown and stockings, with the queer-shaped, three-cornered, and rather soldier-like-looking *chapeau*. They are decidedly the *élite* of the place, and in passing would politely tip the hat in a most graceful manner. We also met the Bishop, who was dressed in a purple silk gown and cowl, around the borders of each of which, a very nice little white frill peeped out, while his whole attire struck me as very odd and fantastic. His demeanor was very dignified, and, attended by a monk on either side, he walked with a most stately tread.

There are few families here of the pure Castilian blood, and most of the people are deficient in the higher moral attributes. Their separation from Spain appears to have inflicted a death-blow on the resources of the country, for since then all enterprise has languished. Slothful, and adverse to exertion, they see nature with a prodigal hand scattering around her rich and precious fruits, which they are content to pluck and eat. The country in the vicinity of Panama, with a little labor might be made a garden spot, bearing all the luxuries that soil can produce, for though an uncultivated wilderness, it yields sufficient to satisfy the simple wants of the natives without toil. The sudden influx of so many strangers, has put them to their wit's end to supply all their requirements, and of course has tended to enhance the value of every thing.

Of the markets, little that is commendatory can be said. All, except

their fruits, which are very numerous, and have a most tempting look, present a hot, dirty, and greasy appearance, while the half-dressed native saleswomen look as greasy and unattractive as their vendibles. Meat is sold, cut into strips, by the yard, while calico in the stores is sold by the pound, thus completely reversing the order of things as they obtain with us. Fish and oysters are numerous, but the latter have a soft, milky appearance, not sufficient to tempt me to a taste. Potatoes, though rarely, I occasionally saw. Yams, very similar in character, though more farinaceous than that fine esculent, are here substituted, and are very abundant. In appearance they somewhat resemble our sweet-potatoes, and often grow to an enormous size. I have no doubt they could be successfully cultivated in most parts of the United States.

At our hotel we had "fish, flesh, and fowl," but the only vegetables we were favored with, consisted of rice boiled in fat, and fresh rolls: the dessert comprising all the luscious fruits of the country. But these should be sparingly indulged in by new-comers, as several fatal cases of disease came under my observation from inattention to this matter. Coming from a climate where the thermometer was at zero, to the relaxing heat of a latitude but nine degrees from the equator, the individuals in question had walked across the Isthmus, drank freely of the water and ate of the fruits, and disease always followed, and in some instances death. The so-called *Panama fever* rarely occurs, unless previous disease has wasted the powers of life, or fatigue and long exposure to the hot sun or rain, and an undue indulgence in the fruits of the country, have predisposed the system to an attack. Temperance in drinking is also a wise precaution in crossing the Isthmus or residing at Panama. The water of the streams is generally charged with a large amount of decayed vegetable matter, and hence if freely drank is apt to induce severe and fatal sickness. A glass of claret or ale occasionally, and nothing stronger, I would advise as a proper substitute. If brandy is used, the blood already fired by the fierce rays of an equatorial sun, can not long endure the accumulated heat, and fatal disease will almost necessarily be the result. A passage across the Isthmus, or a residence at Panama, are by no means to be dreaded; for with due precaution in cleanliness and attention to these hints, my countrymen, intending to travel that route, will find that health and comfort, rather than disease and death, will attend them.

The different gentlemen of our party were daily arriving, and it was pleasant to stroll through the outskirts of the city and witness the joyous meeting of friends or relatives. Many were two days on the route, and some had dismal stories to recount of their adventures by the way. My esteemed friend M———, unused to such mountain-tramps, presented a most woe-begone and comical look. He was covered with mud and dust, having been completely "put through," to use his own phrase, and I could not forbear a smile at his rather ludicrous appearance. "Ah, doctor," he exclaimed, seizing my hand, "these are a high old style of roads I have just been crossing!" One of the party imprudently started alone from Gorgona, and was soon lost in the woods, wandering about among the hills and ravines till night came on, and still he was unable to discover the path, or extricate himself from his

sad dilemma. As evening approached, a new source of alarm occurred in the howling and roaring of wild animals, which frequently crossed his way, as if in pursuit of each other. He represented it, as though all the menageries in creation were let loose around him, and almost frightened to death for fear of an attack from one of the monsters, it was midnight before he succeeded in reaching one of the huts of the country. Here, almost exhausted by his tramp, he lay down, but from the nervous and excited state of his system for many previous hours, and from what he regarded as the suspicious movements of the inmates of the hut, he was unable to sleep, and, wearied as he was, by morning's dawn was again on his feet, arriving at length in safety at Panama, where attention and repose soon recruited his health and strength. The natives say that lions, panthers, and tigers, with other savage wild beasts, prowl about, while the innumerable hosts of monkeys, ant-eaters, and venemous serpents that abound, make the night season a dangerous time to travel.

Now came the most vexatious and annoying business of collecting and arranging our luggage, many of the muleteers not arriving for several days after all the party got in; but I will not inflict upon my reader a recital of our mishaps and troubles, and will content myself with whispering in his ear the important admonition, to *never lose sight of his luggage in crossing the Isthmus of Darien.*

Bidding adieu to Panama, where we had passed some pleasant days, which memory recalls with a high degree of satisfaction, we took a large "bungee," or canoe with square sails, and in about two hours were on board the bark, some three miles distant, and ready for as rapid a flight, as her immense canvas could afford, for San Francisco. In passing out, we sailed through a flock of thousands of pelicans, all busy in darting, soaring, and skimming the water, intent on the one object of seizing the little finny tribe that in myriads could be seen sporting on the surface. We were enabled to observe them closely, for our movements did not appear to disturb their pursuits. It was a most interesting sight to witness their evolutions, and the facility with which, either in flight or resting on the water, they would seize and swallow so many, and occasionally such enormous fish. In this act, the great sack near the beak is extended to its utmost dimensions, but in flight it is contracted along with the neck, and they present the odd appearance of being all head and shoulders.

About four o'clock, all were safely on board, and we weighed anchor for the first time on the grand Pacific, intending to proceed to the island of Taboga, nine miles distant, for a supply of water and other stores, till we could reach the port of Realejio. "Once more upon the ocean"—'twas a joyful thought, as our vessel cut the swelling waves and rapidly bore us down the bay, sending a thrill of delight to every breast, which could only be relieved by a regular old-fashioned Yankee hurra, that nine times was made to echo through the air. Well is it for us that the future is concealed from view, for alas, had some on that vessel known the trying events they would pass through and the harrowing scenes they would witness, with disease and death in our midst, on a calm sea, beneath the burning sun of the equator, how different would have been their anticipation of a happy and a prosper-

ous voyage, and how differently would they have given expression to the feelings such knowledge had induced.

In less than an hour we cast anchor off the town of Taboga, a small collection of thatched tenements, shaded by tall and graceful palm-trees, and about of the same character as the towns of Gorgona and Chagres. The appearance of the Pearl Islands here, dotting the placid ocean, was extremely beautiful, as the declining sun cast his golden rays over the calm and peaceful scene, throwing hill and valley into light and shade. Some of the high and pointed peaks in view were evidently volcanic and almost bare of verdure, while others were clothed with a rich green mantle, interspersed with tropical plants and fruits, and clinging vines, throughout their whole extent.

CHAPTER IV.

Passengers Ashore.—Extinct Volcano.—Fight with a Boa Constrictor.—A Wounded Man.—Part company with a Lady and Gentleman.—Return a Sick Man to Panama.—Town of Taboga.—An Enchanting Spot.—Fruits.—Sickness on Board.—Whales.—Unpleasant Incident.—Weigh Anchor.—Another Man in the Hold.—English Bread-Act.—The Captain and his Mates.—A Sail.—Incidents.—A Calm.—Increasing Sickness.—A Death.—Intense Heat.—Another Death.—Awful Situation.—Burial at Sea.—Gorgeous Sunset.—More Sickness.—Escape from "the Villainous Hole."

On the following morning most of the passengers went ashore to view the island, but as the day was lowering, with an occasional shower, I preferred to remain on board. They gave an exciting account of their adventures, some having penetrated with true Yankee enterprise to the summit of one of the highest peaks in view, and there discovered the immense crater of an extinct volcano. Others had a battle with an enormous Boa Constrictor, and after divers advances and retreats succeeded in overcoming the reptile. In removing his skin, as a trophy of the fight, they discovered an immense distension in a part of his coil, the result of his recently having swallowed an *Iguana*, an animal larger than a cat, which had produced a partial torpor, or probably there would have been a less fortunate termination of the conflict.

One boat-load returned from the shore about eleven o'clock, and when half-way to the vessel I heard my name called most vociferously, the object of which I soon discovered was to invite my professional attention to a wounded man who was among them. It appeared that one of their number had foolishly worn a naked dirk-knife in his girdle. When about leaving the shore, he stooped forward to push off the boat, raising his knee at the same time with considerable force, the consequence of which was a severe wound on the leg in immediate proximity to the femoral artery, which at first was thought to

be severed. This, however, I soon ascertained was not the case, though he had bled profusely, and whilst I was dressing the wound he fainted, nor did his system ever rally from the shock it sustained.

In the afternoon a lady and gentleman, with their servant, who had accompanied us thus far, being dissatisfied with the arrangements on board, engaged a bungee at Taboga and returned to Panama. At the moment of their departure, the swivel was fired, by way of expressing the satisfaction of the passengers, which compliment was acknowledged by the retiring party, waving an equally-satisfied adieu !

I was soon doomed to learn the discomforts and annoyances of being surgeon in a crowded ship, for about two o'clock on the following morning, I was roused from pleasant dreams of home and all the loved ones there, to administer to a poor fellow who had fallen, headforemost, through the hatchway into the hold of the vessel. He was not materially injured by the fall, but I recognized him as a German, who had been ill at Panama, and was now under treatment. From the low form of fever that was consuming him, he was in no condition to undertake the voyage to San Francisco. His disease was "Panama fever," contracted on the Isthmus, and being a person of uncleanly habits, I considered it due to the rest of the passengers, to give a certificate to the captain to that effect, desiring him to be returned to the hospital at Panama, which was ordered and done, his passage-money being returned to him.

In the morning I went ashore, accompanied by some other gentlemen, roaming along the beach, and picking up the shells, which are found here in great numbers. We then passed through the town, which, while presenting more rural attractions, was not dissimilar to those we had seen. The streets and the side of the mountain on which it stands, were, in many places, difficult to pass over, being composed of masses of rock and lava, evidently the result of volcanic eruptions from the adjacent peaks. From thence we continued our stroll, and climbing up the hill-side, came to an enchanting spot ; a mountain streamlet which descending from above in many miniature cascades, plunging and foaming over cliff and precipice, had worn deep and rounded basins in the solid rocks, forming limpid pools of cold and delightful water. It forcibly brought to mind a beautiful and romantic spot in my own native land, near the monumental city, where a gurgling rill leaps joyously through the dingle, and where I had passed many a happy hour. Here we tarried for some time beneath the welcome shade, enjoyed the luxury of a mountain bath in one of the largest reservoirs close by, and partook of some of the luscious fruits of the country, pineapples, oranges, and water-melons, which a native brought to us, freshly plucked from plant, tree, and vine.

Leaving this delightful spot, which I was almost loath to quit, I returned to duty on board the bark, sickness having already begun to make its appearance among us. In the afternoon, I had an excellent opportunity to observe the movements of three whales, swimming within twenty yards of our anchorage. Every few minutes their immense heads would heave up from the ocean, and two large jets like sparkling fountains would burst forth at each breath, with a peculiar blowing sound, causing a commotion and light foam on the water for

some distance around. As the head went down, the broad tail would rise, and with one or two lashes on the surface, increasing its turbulence and marking the spot for some time, it would disappear, and a few rods ahead the same thing would be repeated, till they were finally lost to view.

On the afternoon of the 16th, all hands were mustered on deck, preparatory to calling over the list of passengers, when it was discovered that two or three were on board without consent or license, not having paid their passage. Search was immediately made, and a swarthy, ill-looking Spaniard was found secreted in the hold, under a pile of oakum. He was brought on deck, and I pitied the poor wretch, as he stood there, subjected to the eager gaze of the multitude. The captain proposed that he should be tied and flogged, but this proposition was indignantly rejected, and he was put ashore. He had no sooner got into the boat than his true character was revealed. Looking up to the side of the vessel with a most demoniacal expression at one of the passengers, who had urged that his bundle be examined before he went off, he shook his clenched fist at him, and said—"I will mark you, and will have your heart's blood yet in California." The fellow was taken to Taboga.

This unpleasant incident over, on Friday afternoon, inauspicious day! we prepared for departure. The song of the sailors at the windlass had ceased, the union-jack was run up, the swivel fired, and soon, under a heavy press of canvas, masts, sails, and spars bent to the freshening breeze, and our bark danced merrily over the water.

The next day was excessively hot, with a calm sea. We ran about a hundred miles through the night, in a southwesterly course, intending, if possible, to strike the trade-winds one or two degrees north of the equator. To-day we hooked an enormous shark, and, after floundering and slashing about the deck for some time, the captain cut off his tail, a custom with sailors, and had him thrown overboard, where he was quickly devoured by the multitudes alongside and in the wake of the vessel. Another man was found secreted in the hold, and as he was evidently much exhausted from want of nourishment, and laboring under the low form of disease denominated Panama fever, a collection was taken up, to which most of us cheerfully subscribed, to pay his passage.

The weather became most oppressively hot as we continued our southwesterly course, and the brains of all on board seemed to be influenced by the sun's rays, evinced by the belligerent propensities that were manifested, which at one time threatened to have *almost* a serious termination. The ire of the Yankees was aroused, by an attempt to enforce an odious English bread-act! The steerage had bitterly complained of the wretched, indifferent fare that was afforded, and the irregularity with which even that was served. Complaints were few but deep from the cabin also, for, with breakfast at twelve, and tea at seven, (two meals per diem,) and neither ale nor wine on board, who would not complain? One morning, as usual, the hard, dry, brown English biscuit, interspersed with what, though of vegetable origin, evidently possessed animal life, were being distributed to the steerage passengers. Few would receive them, for, happening to have got possession

of a barrel of white biscuit in the absence of the mate, they had freely helped themselves. Discovering this, but too late to prevent it, he became furious, and threatened to throw the first man overboard who attempted it a second time. Yankee blood could not brook such a threat, with all their other accumulated wrongs, at the hands of John Bull, and had not the most conciliatory measures been adopted, with a promise of different arrangements in future, more in harmony with the spirit of the contract entered into at Panama, it is more than probable that himself and the captain would have shared that fate, and the vessel have been taken possession of by the malcontents. Few on board would have censured the latter proceeding, for the officers, thus far, had proved themselves totally incompetent to have command of a passenger-ship. With gross ignorance, and inattention to the comfort or wants of any, they evinced a stolidity and want of forecast which were unpardonable. The assumption of a *dignified reserve*, on the part of the captain and subordinate officers, was ludicrous enough to some, but provoked emotions in others which in no event would have been much longer suppressed. At one time the captain threatened to run his vessel ashore, and, on another occasion, directed that she should be put about, to return to Panama. This latter procedure met with so favorable and cordial a reception, evinced by a cheer from all on board, that he quickly countermanded the order, determined on opposition at all hazards. In truth, he knew not what was due to himself or his passengers.

On the 18th, a sail was descried, and, as it approached, the glorious stars and stripes, the magnificent flag of our country, could be seen floating from her gaff. The union-jack of England was then run up from our vessel, and a boat put off from the stranger to board us. It soon came alongside, containing the mate and six seamen, all noble-looking fellows. The vessel proved to be the bark Equator, Captain Matthews, from New Bedford, out seventeen months on a whaling voyage. They asked for papers and news, for, floating about the Pacific in this distant region, they had no knowledge who was president of the United States, and had merely heard a vague rumor that California was the land of promise, and contained mineral wealth. On these heads we enlightened them, and when their vessel was regained, she was soon seen standing off in the direction of Panama. There, we afterwards learned, she reported that the passengers of the John Ritson had placed the captain and officers in confinement, and had taken command of the vessel. We were not surprised at this, for, from the want of *a head*, the utmost confusion and insubordination prevailed, and a stranger might readily have inferred it all. We were amused, also, to learn that, in consequence of this information, the consul there had sent a British man-of-war in pursuit of us. And all because Brother Jonathan resisted the bread-act!

Towards evening a glorious breeze sprang up, and our bark walked the water at the rate of eleven knots, the hot, almost stifling atmosphere of the morning being sensibly and most agreeably tempered by a rising wind. In the night I was aroused by a drenching from salt-water, which almost inundated me. On retiring, as usual I had left the little window of my berth open, to get all the cool air that was possible, and

then I would have none to spare, and through this the water found so copious and sudden an entrance as nearly drowned me. It was a cool, refreshing incident, on this hot latitude.

From this time to the 22d we were becalmed, lazily floating about like a log in the ocean. Our sails hung from the masts, and on the long heaving swell, we would toss up and down, beneath the fierce rays of a scorching sun, with no object to relieve the monotony save the deep blue waves below and the burning azure vault above. All was calm, still, and hot. Much sickness occurred at this time, owing in some measure to bad diet and irregular meals, but chiefly to the continued prostrating heat, from which cause all experienced a degree of lassitude and debility.

Early on the morning of the 23d I was called to visit the man who had accidently wounded himself at Taboga, when he lost such a quantity of blood. He had been under treatment since, but had evidently been sinking for the last two days. He had recovered from the wound, but the shock his system sustained at the time of its infliction, when he exclaimed, "I have killed myself," combined with the continued enervating and excessive heat, had brought on fever, which as the result proved was fatal. About eight o'clock his eyes were closed in the last, long sleep of death, and some time thereafter his remains were committed to the silent deep, as food for fishes. The burial service was read—the water parted as he was launched in—the waves closed over him—all was hushed and still save the dismal plunge, and the sad scene was over.

Soon thereafter a sail was seen, which when we drew near, proved to be the Peruvian brig "Venao," last from San Blas and bound for Paita. She had been becalmed for the last ten days, and was nearly out of water, which we, in justice to ourselves, were unable to supply. They also requested some medicines, which I was fortunately enabled to furnish. She bore away to the Gallipagos Islands, in pursuit of water but made slow progress. The weather continued terribly hot, and the sea terribly calm Scarcely a breath of air was stirring, while the broad Pacific presented the appearance of an immense lake, without a ripple.

We were still becalmed on the following day, the sun shone from a cloudless sky with most intense fervor, and instead of making any headway we receded from the point of destination.

Another man to-day paid the debt of nature. He had been ill all the way from New York to Chagres; and on the Isthmus and at Panama, contrary to the advice and caution urged upon him, had been very imprudent. We were now nearly under the equator. His constitution was much shattered, and when attacked with the prevailing fever, under the fiery rays of an equatorial sun, death soon laid his icy hand upon him.

As we assembled around his remains, when the last sad offices were being performed, preparatory to committing them to the mighty deep, I cast my eyes over the crowd, and could not avoid being struck and deeply impressed with what I saw. The complexion of every man was that of an extremely sallow hue, approaching more to the lividness of death than any thing I can describe, while the anxious, fearful expres-

sion of their countenances, as they gazed on the prostrate form of one of their number, about being consigned to a watery tomb, was such as I hope to be spared ever witnessing again. Many afterwards expressed to me the terrible apprehensions they then labored under. Who would be the next victim? The feeling of lassitude, consequent upon the enervating heat, with disease and death stalking fearfully around, aroused all to a sense of the powerless and awful situation in which we were placed. In truth it was a trying time, attended with a sickening sensation of the heart, which our helpless condition, subjected to the fierce rays of a burning sun on a calm sea, another of our company having departed to "that bourne from whence no traveler returns," which weighed upon the spirits and induced a gloomy foreboding, legibly impressed on the countenance of every man on board.

"Then shook the timid and stood still the brave."

A burial at sea is an affecting sight to witness; it is an awful and impressive solemnity. The judicious and appropriate prayer offered by the Rev. Mr. ——, at the close of the day, was well-timed and had a salutary effect.

As evening approached, and the fiery orb of day sunk to rest, the sight was grand aud imposing. Rich and gorgeous clouds, blending into every imaginable shape and hue, were mirrored in the placid ocean, the refluent rays with brilliant and glowing coloring, beautifully traced on the dim and distant horizon, where the new moon and a bright star were just visible, which with the declining sun presented a rare combination, such as I had never witnessed. The spectacle was truly sublime.

On the following day it was, as usual, still calm and intensely hot; and the captain, finding we were almost daily losing, and were being rapidly carried by the currents towards the equator, with little progress westward, determined to change his course and steer in a northwesterly direction. He was also influenced by the state of things on board. Much dissatisfaction prevailed. Sickness pressed heavily upon us. Death in two successive days had already occurred, while the condition of others indicated, that a few more days in that low latitude, would consign many to the deep. It was therefore deemed most prudent to pursue this course, and as a further means to stay the hand of disease, the hold and cabin of the vessel were thoroughly cleansed and fumigated, and disinfecting agents freely used, with an urgent recommendation that each passenger should preserve the utmost personal cleanliness by daily ablutions with sea-water. These sanatory precautions were of essential advantage, and the occurrence of a heavy rain that night, which scattered those sleeping on deck like frightened sheep, and a pleasant breeze from the southeast, which bore us onward, was most refreshing and invigorating, as the improved appearance of all indicated, and the salutary influence exerted on the sick was soon apparent. It continued to rain till the following night, with loud peals of thunder and vivid lightning, attended by frequent and sudden squalls, when it gradually ceased, and the wind set in the right quarter, speeding us out of the "villainous hole," as some termed it, and rapidly carrying us onward, away from the pestilential atmosphere of the equator. An

observation the next day, gave 8° 24′ north latitude, and as heretofore we had run several degrees south of Panama, it was something gained, for calculating the west longitude we were now about five hundred miles distant from it, and could not but perceive that the overruling arm of the Almighty was plainly visible, in thus rescuing us from the perilous situation in which we were placed.

CHAPTER V.

Tranquil Sea.—Fiery Sun and Cloudless Skies.—A Sailing-Vessel not adapted to the Pacific.—Change our Course.—Myriads of Water-Fowls and Fishes.—The Porpoise, Grampus, Dolphin, and Devil-Fish.—Coast of Costa Rica.—Milder Atmosphere.—Delightful Breezes.—Amusing Incidents.—Off Realejio.—Fourth of March.—Shark Supper.—Increasing Heat.—Brilliant Nights.—A Death.—Remarkable Coincidences.—Coast of Guatemala.—Repose on the Pacific.—Gulf of Tehuantepec—Coast of Oaxaca.—A Volcano.—Harbor, City, and Inhabitants of Acapulco.—Attempt to Sleep Ashore.—A Mexican Salute.—Sumptuous Repast.—Almost a Battle.

Thus we continued slumbering along, with occasionally a light wind, but more frequently a dead calm. At such times, the sea was tranquil as a lake unruffled by a breeze, or like a mirror whose surface of polished glass has never been disturbed by a breath; the smooth water beneath, and fiery sun in a cloudless sky above, being the only objects of the broad expanse.

A sailing-vessel is not adapted, nay, it is totally unfit for the Pacific. None but steamers should ever attempt to plough its waters. With a constant succession of calms, or the wind blowing steadily in one direction, and that from the north, for some distance from the coast the greater part of the year, it is almost impossible to make any headway in a sailing-vessel. Ships have been becalmed in the Bay of Panama for twenty and thirty days. I knew of one in this situation for three weeks, within one hundred and fifty miles of the city, having a messenger with important and urgent dispatches on board, who eventually was compelled to take to the long-boat, and be rowed up!

With these difficulties to contend against, my reader must be aware that our progress was necessarily slow, and our captain again changed his course and stood in for the land, hoping, as he was told would be the case, to find that a land-breeze constantly blew from the southern quarter. He must not suppose, however, that I design to inflict upon him all the daily occurrences and incidents among us throughout the voyage. I will content myself with noting only a few of those which at the time appeared most interesting, and attracted our attention.

As we drew our slow length along, in heading for the land, we were struck with amazement at the enormous quantity of fish and water-fowl with which the Pacific abounds. For miles around, these latter often could

be seen blackening the surface of the ocean, and resting on its placid waters; while, at other times, sportive fishes, of as various kinds, and almost as numerous, would leap from the water, often fifteen feet high, making a most animated and interesting sight. The porpoise, and grampus too, would roll along in regular files of a hundred abreast, tumbling over or rising and falling in even time like the drill of veterans, snorting and grunting in unison with their march across the silent deep. We also observed many large whales at one time in the vicinity of the ship, puffing and spouting the water high into the air as they arose, or lazily floating near the surface. The beautiful and graceful dolphins too, sported around the vessel, some of which we caught with a harpoon, and, chameleon-like, as they lay on the deck, their color changed with the approach of death from green, blue, and orange, to the finest rainbow commingling of tints. It is only in death that the dolphin reveals his brightest and most gorgeous beauty.

Among other curious specimens of vitality, floating on and in the briny wave, we saw an immense devil-fish, strange and odd-looking beyond conception. It approached the side of the vessel, as we leaned over, where, apparently pleased to attract attention, it would cast the large rolling eyes upward, and throw itself into every possible attitude, remaining on the surface long enough to afford a view of its outlandish conformation, and most *devilish*-looking structure. It apparently possessed long arms, at the extremities of which were fangs or claws, while between the shoulders was seated its small, but most hideous and quick-moving head. In shape not unlike a bat, it was truly a horrid-looking monster.

The first land we made, was the promontory of Nicoya, at the northern extremity of Costa Rica, and on the succeeding day we passed a small island, on which a castle or fortress stands, commanding the entrance to the harbor. As we slowly cruised along the coast for several days, we had occasional views of the headlands, but did not approach near enough to observe the character of the shores. The atmosphere was much milder than any we had experienced, the sun was not so intense, while the gentle air wafted over the water from the beach was bland and refreshing. The pleasant breeze, light for the first few days, gradually increased, till on the evening of the fifth day, it blew almost a gale from the southeast. Without a speck on the deep blue arch to obscure a single peeping star, but with an effulgent moon lighting up the brilliant waters, we dashed through the sparkling sea at the rate of ten and a half knots. It was a sight we had not witnessed on the Pacific, and so much did we enjoy it, that many sat up to a late hour, loath to quit a scene so attractive, and rendered doubly so by the knowledge that we were speeding on our way in such magnificent style. The breeze had not subsided by morning, but continued to urge us forward at the same rate. Our deck was nearly perpendicular. No one could attempt to walk it, but rapidly running from point to point, would seize on objects in passing to sustain him. The foam and spray dashed from the bows and flew in every direction, often extending so far, that some half a dozen persons at once would be completely saturated by the briny deluge, much to the amusement of those who escaped, as many a merry peal would follow each submerging. We were now off Realejio, and as the wind

was blowing us from the land in a northwesterly direction, we determined to take advantage of it, and continue our course, intending to stop at Acapulco, or one of the ports higher up the Pacific, the captain stating that he had provisions and water sufficient for that purpose. We therefore steadily kept our way, but towards noon (our usual fate) the wind lulled, the sails hanging loosely from the mast, or flapping about like the wings of an immense condor. In truth, we were becalmed. And here I would take occasion to advise my countrymen never to leave Panama in a sailing-vessel. The frequent and vexatious calms which generally prevail from December to May, rated here as the winter season, between that point and San Blas, will almost preclude the possibility of their making much progress, while the hurricanes, tornadoes, deluges of rain and destructive lightnings that are apt to occur during the summer months, or from June to November, renders the navigation along the coast extremely hazardous. The coast too, at this time, is regarded as so unhealthy, as to be abandoned by the inhabitants. *Take a steamer all the way through, and buy your tickets in New York before starting.*

The 4th of March was a mild, resplendent morning, but we recollected that being Sunday, the United States was without a President! To-day a shark was hooked, and in commemoration of the event, a shark supper was prepared, and his jaws containing upward of three hundred teeth were preserved. Of the former I declined to partake, though many appeared to relish it, but I claimed the latter as my share of the booty.

The heat continued to increase each day as we stood off from the land, but a brilliant moon and pleasant breeze, made the nights delightful and magnificent. So clear was the light and so transparent the atmosphere, that we could plainly see to read without any other lamp than that which was suspended in the limitless expanse.

On the 7th, another of our number, and one of the most esteemed members of our party, quietly breathed his last, "and his spirit returned to the God who gave it." With deep grief, his remains were committed to their last resting-place, the sea. He had been ill with the prevailing fever for the last ten days, and his symptoms from the first, were of such a character that few anticipated a favorable result. He also labored under a bodily affliction, that in any situation would have seriously retarded his recovery, but in such a latitude as we had been compelled to pass through, it greatly contributed to hasten his departure. All the others who were ill had recovered or were convalescent. It is worthy of note, that in the three deaths which had occurred since we left Panama, the constitution of each person had been impaired or undermined by previous causes. It was remarked, that one death out of each party from New Orleans, New York, and Baltimore, now on board, had occurred.

In a day or two thereafter, we were cruising along the coast of Guatemala, and passed the site of the old city of that name, the land famous for its earthquakes and volcanoes, and all the heavings and convulsions of nature, which laid the city itself in ruins, and destroyed so many of its inhabitants.

Little of interest occurred from day to day to relieve the monotonous

routine of our tedious and most fatiguing passage, and if the reader will fancy one hundred and twenty prisoners, sitting or lounging listlessly about the deck, subjected to the rays of a scorching sun, sometimes as high as 100° of Fahrenheit in the cabin, with often scarcely a breath to temper its ardor, while our vessel gradually rose and fell to the gentle undulations of a calm and lake-like sea, and bear in mind the enervating influence of the climate, both bodily and mentally, he will have an idea of the tedium, the trials, the *désagrémens* of the voyage.

Crossing the Gulf of Tehuantepec, where we encountered head-winds and a rough sea, we ran up to the coast of Oaxaca, here bold and high, and as night drew on, noticed a huge flame issuing from one of the inland mountain-peaks, alternately subsiding and darting upward. We soon recognized it as one of the numerous volcanoes that prevail on the coast of Central America, and in the interior of Mexico. It lighted up the horizon for some distance round, with a lurid glare.

The succeeding ten days were a constant succession of calms, during which time, to use the not very elegant but certainly expressive phrase of Captain P., we were "flogging a toad through tar!" A most welcome breeze at last relieved us from this annoyance, and in the space of twenty-four hours we made more progress than we had done in the previous ten days; and about four o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 29th of March, we found ourselves off the entrance to the harbor of Acapulco. While in the offing, we were boarded by a black pilot, and a yellow little Mexican in full uniform, the commander of the fort, attended by one of his black guards, who remained with us till we reached the place. The entrance into the harbor is very striking. The shores of the Pacific here, are bold and high, completely concealing the town from view. Through a cleft in the hills, an arm of the sea runs up, into which we steered, and surrounded by rugged hills and lofty mountains, sailed for about two miles, till we came to a turn in the bight. A fresh breeze from the ocean swept us on, when a most beautiful little bay, bounded on all sides by mountains whose tops mingled with the clouds, was presented to view. The town rested on its shores, and the fort stood upon an eminence in advance, over which the Mexican green, white, and red flag soon floated, as we approached with the union-jack flying at our gaff. We ran in between the town and fort, and cast anchor alongside of two little Mexican schooners, the only vessels in port.

We were soon surrounded by canoes, filled with fruits, which the half-naked boatmen were eager to sell, and the jabber and scenes of Panama, Gorgona, and Chagres, were renewed.

Accompanied by some half a dozen of the party, I went ashore, and was somewhat disappointed in my expectations, in regard to the extent and general appearance of Acapulco. The houses, consisting of mud with brick-tiled roofs, and reed with thatch coverings, are generally but one story in height, the eaves extending so far over as to shelter the foot-way. Though cleaner and neater-looking, there was not great dissimilarity between many parts of this place and the towns on the Isthmus. Here were the palm-leaf hackalas, the palm and cocoanut trees, the dogs, the pigs, the jabber, and the half-covered natives; these, in their general appearance, and in their habits, with few exceptions, partook of the same characteristics as those in the places referred to. They

consisted of blacks, and all intermediate shades to the nearly white, some with woolly heads, showing presence of African blood, and others with straight or curly hair and high cheek-bones, denoting their Spanish and Aztec origin. Here was evidently much more pretension, however, than among the inhabitants of the Isthmus. Nor did they, particularly their miserable-looking soldiers, appear to manifest much love for "los Americanos," their imprecations and scowling looks occasionally, as we passed them, telling their feelings too plainly to be mistaken.

Though a much older place, being famous as the point whence Cortez fitted out many of his memorable expeditions on the Pacific, Acapulco has not the venerable nor city-like aspect of Panama, and is much smaller, containing not over 2,500 inhabitants. In 1818, a considerable portion of the town was destroyed by an earthquake, traces of which are still visible in the fallen towers and dilapidated walls of an old stone convent. These and other ruins, together with the volcanic character of the soil and lava lying about, attest the truth of nature's convulsions.

Fatigued from even a short stroll, after our close imprisonment of forty-one days, the latter two weeks of which we were allowanced with bad water and wretched provisions, we were glad to seek rest in a "Fouda," or eating-house, where, with coffee, chocolate, eggs, and rolls, we were regaled and invigorated. Our polite host offered us ample accommodations for the night, which, when we came to test, after again perambulating the town till we were thoroughly fatigued, were not altogether in accordance with our home ideas of comfort. We were placed on tables and in hammocks under the piazza or shed, surrounding the little square court-yard or open space, in which were congregated pigs, chickens, ducks, dogs, and divers kinds of emptyings from "pots, kettles, and pans." The sonorous breathing of most of the party soon told that they were in the land of dreams. Half an hour had not elapsed before the shrill crowing of roosters, almost at our ears, startled, and, of course, quickly awakened all by the unusual sound. As this exercise of the chanticleers continued hourly, thereafter, till morning, besides the loud crunching, grunting, and squealing of the pigs, the barking of the dogs, and last, though not least, the biting of the fleas, sleep was most effectually banished, and, before dawn, we left our hammocks and tables any thing but refreshed by this our first night in Acapulco.

Starting on a tour of exploration, we soon reached the market, which we found crowded and well-stocked with a variety of familiar-looking as well as unknown vegetables and all kinds of tropical fruits, and beef cut in strips and hung on ropes. Fish were abundant. Paying *un medio* for some boiled milk, which the little brown *muchacha* poured from a large earthern jar, and handed to us in a cocoanut shell, we continued our stroll to the hill on which the fort is situated, and had a fine view of the surrounding country. Looking towards the bay, we noticed a vessel at anchor that before we had not seen. She had arrived the previous evening, and proved to be the British sloop-of-war "Calypso," having been stationed in the Pacific for some time, engaged in making explorations and a chart of the whole coast. Her officers afterward informed us, that we would probably be forty or fifty days

longer on our passage to San Francisco. She was said to have nearly two millions of specie on board, collected at the different ports along the coast. In the course of the morning she saluted the fort, which, in returning, the Mexican's powder gave out, and they had to borrow sufficient from their visitor to fire the requisite number of guns!

Returned from our perambulations, about nine o'clock we sat down to a most sumptuous breakfast, prepared by mine host of the *Fouda*, and served in the same place and on the identical tables we had occupied the night before! It consisted of fried chickens, stewed beef, tomatoes and onions, fresh fish fried with omelet, coffee, chocolate, bread, and milk, for which we each paid "uno peso," or one dollar, and almost alarmed our attentive host with the keen appetites that did such ample justice to his bountiful supply.

On our arrival, we found about twenty persons here, who came by the Vera Cruz route across the country. They described the privations and hardships they endured by the way as perfectly terrible. Some had been here for two months. Eighteen of these poor fellows the captain agreed to take on board. With this arrangement the authorities were disposed to interfere, on the ground that our vessel now had more than the complement of passengers allowed by law. The true secret of their interference, however, was, that one of their number owned the schooners lying in the harbor, already alluded to, and was desirous to have these men as passengers to Mazatlan, some, in their anxiety to get off, having already partly engaged a passage. Our arrival altered their views, as the little schooner would not sail for six weeks, and would only carry them as far as Mazatlan.

It was threatened, that if we attempted to take these men, the guns of the fort should be opened upon us, and we would not be permitted to leave the harbor. Brother Jonathan and John Bull would not endure this arbitrary and high-handed threat, and it was strongly urged that we should attack and take the town, and spike their guns, our own boys being ripe for any such mischief, their two days ashore having rather heated than cooled their fiery blood. The officers of the "Calypso" promised to batter down the place if we were molested or a gun was fired at us. These rumors were soon spread through the town, by some of our independant and valiant boys, and the poor Mexicans were so alarmed lest our threat should be executed, that an order was at once issued to allow no one to land with a weapon of any kind, and our additional passengers were permitted to depart without opposition.

CHAPTER VI.

Weigh Anchor.—An Omen.—Death of "the Old Man."—Calms and Head-Winds.—Views of the Coast.—Volcano of Colima.—Cape Corrientes.—Magnificent Sunset.—"'Bout Ship."—Gulf of California.—Chilling Atmosphere.—Its Effects.—First View of Lower California.—Cape Palmas.—Beautiful Scene.—Cape St. Lucas.—Halo of Glory.—A Steamer.—Head-Winds and Currents.—Cape Falso.—Rugged Coast.—Disagreeable Weather.—Discomforts on Board.—Short of Provisions.—Incompetency of the Captain.

By the morning of April the 1st, water and all additional stores were provided, and safely deposited on board, and, about two o'clock, to the song of the sailors, "Cheerily men, cheerily O," we weighed anchor; and, returning the cheers of the numbers assembled on the beach to witness our departure, we quickly spread our canvas to the breeze, for another trial on that treacherous element, the "deep and dark blue ocean."

One of the sailors deserted at Acapulco, and was not recovered. He left a request in writing not to pursue him as he was tired of life, and had gone off to commit suicide. He had attempted to drown himself on a former occasion, but was rescued. The others said it was a bad omen at starting.

Shortly after we got out to sea, I was sent for by an old gentleman, a cabin passenger, who expressed a wish to see me. Taking my hand, he said, "I wish I was off." I told him we were off, and going very finely. He replied, "I wish to go somewhere else. This world is a humbug, and not worth living for, and I now want to die." He said he had sent for me to ask that I would write his will and then administer to him some powerful opiate to hasten his death, for, to use his own words, he was "anxious to be off." I endeavored to cheer him up, but he persisted in declining any treatment to prolong existence, for, with little religious feeling, and no relations, life to him was a desolate and cheerless waste. He was a physician, having practiced many years in Cuba, and was an educated, intelligent man, speaking several languages fluently. A native of Florida, he had traveled the world over, and, with the garrulity of age, for he was seventy-two, could relate many interesting incidents of his adventures. He was carried across the Isthmus in a hammock, and was now on his way to California, to amass a rapid fortune, illustrating the ruling passion strong in death, for, when first introduced to him at Panama, I hardly thought he could survive a week. It was to the surprise of all, that he endured our trials in that "cursed pit," as he termed it, for he scarcely ever left his berth. Though hardly able to walk, he was without disease. He was prematurely old, and in flesh was a mere skeleton. He directed that the little money he had (a few hundred dollars) should be placed by the captain in the hands of the governor of California, as a nucleus for other endowments to a hospital or some charitable institution there. A

glass of wine was necessary, occasionally, to sustain him, while this little document was being prepared, and I had to guide his hand in signing it. The effort exhausted him. He fell back, and soon, thereafter, quietly breathed his last. His remains were committted to the deep. Adieu, old man!

The first ten days following our departure from Acapulco, were diversified with calms and strong head-winds, giving somewhat of variety to the usual monotony of our voyage hitherto on the Pacific. The wind occasionaly blew with much violence, causing a tremendous head-sea, over which our vessel labored, as we were compelled to beat in its very teeth. At such times she tossed and plunged fearfully, making it difficult to stand on deck or sit at table, and causing considerable seasickness, but without disturbing my equilibrium, for I was only sick of the sea. The atmosphere was also sensibly changed, and had become much colder.

As we stood off and on the land, which all along the coast was bold, rugged, and mountainous, we enjoyed many beautiful and picturesque views. For three days and nights the volcano of Colima was in full view, and in full blast. It was one hundred miles distant from us, when first seen. Situated thirty miles from the coast, on a towering peak 12,000 feet in height, the enormous flames issuing from its crater, presented a magnificent sight from the deck of our vessel.

On the 11th we came in view of Cape Corrientes, a bold headland, jutting far out into the ocean; and, as evening approached, we ran so near as distinctly to see the heaving and hear the thundering of the breakers, as with a deep sullen roar they dashed the spray far and wide on the rock-bound coast. The high mountains in the interior of Mexico were directly in front and alongside of us. One of those glorious sunsets, which on the Pacific are so remarkable, and of such frequent occurrence, was here presented to our admiring gaze in all its grandeur and sublimity. Nowhere had I seen such gorgeous lines, such fantastic shapes among the clouds, and such rich blending of colors, reflected in a thousand lovely tints on mountain, sea, and sky, as we here witnessed; ocean, earth, and air were lit up with the splendor of the brilliant spectacle.

Soon the skipper's well-known voice was heard to "'bout ship." "'Bout ship" was echoed along the decks. "Helm hard-a-lee," "Tacks and sheets," "Mainsail haul," "Fore t'bowlin." "Let go and haul," were repeated at brief intervals; which orders being accomplished, brought the vessel round, and with the flight of a sea-bird she cut her way through the rolling billows, heading boldly out into the Gulf of California or Sea of Cortez.

For the next five days we were out of sight of land, during which time a most decided change was perceptible in the air, the weather becoming quite cool before we approached Cape St. Lucas at the opposite entrance to the Gulf. Most of us were glad to resume warmer clothing and thick overcoats. Some contracted severe colds from inattention to these matters, the relaxed condition of their systems being unable to resist the sudden chilling influence of the atmosphere.

About six o'clock on the morning of the 16th we descried a dim looming of distant land, which was soon recognized as the southeastern-

most part of Lower California, known as Cape Palmas. As the day advanced, the bold coast and bluff hills became more distinct, and by evening we had a fine view of the whole range, beginning at Cape St. Lucas, to which we were heading, and extending eastward as far as the eye could reach; the glowing beams of a magnificent sunset, tipping every mountain peak and crested wave. Most welcome was the sight to us, for we had long wished to gaze on the shores of California, and though still far distant from our journey's end, here was an adjacent territory bearing that name, which when we first beheld it was encircled in a halo of glory. We accepted the omen!

We had approached to within half a mile of Cape St. Lucas, when the order, "All hands 'bout ship," was again heard, and with a spanking breeze we flew off on the surging sea, and received such a tossing and tumbling, as made it difficult to hold on even in our berths and hammocks. On deck the air was raw and chilling, and the heavy night dew made it most uncomfortable.

The following day we stood in for the Cape, hoping to be able to weather it. About twelve o'clock, the cry of "Steamer, Steamer," was echoed around, and we were soon congregated on deck, to witness the wonder. All was excitement, in hopes she would draw near, and enable us to dispatch a line to distant friends. We watched her intensely and eagerly till she had passed the Cape, when our fond anticipations were crushed, by seeing her stand off in the direction of Mazatlan. Her fires were not lighted. She was sailing beautifully, favored by the wind and current, against which we almost in vain were contending.

Finding we could make no progress, the tremendous current and furious wind which swept down the coast driving us rapidly astern, we again stood out to sea, and for three days were tossing, heaving, and tumbling about, and sometimes flying through the water at the rate of ten knots, before we could double the stormy Cape. At last it was accomplished, and we then slowly passed around Cape Falso, the southwestern extremity of Lower California. The appearance of the coast was rugged, and though picturesque had a sterile look; little vegetation being perceptible.

For the next two weeks, we continued to beat against a violent wind almost amounting to a gale, rough head-sea, and powerful current, and of course made little progress. The foggy drizzling weather and chilling atmosphere were most uncomfortable. Superadded to these, and throughout the voyage, there were other discomforts on board, which, with the least care and attention on the part of the officers, could have been readily corrected. We vowed to have nothing more to do with British barks, for of all the insubordination, carelessness, and filth ever witnessed on board a ship, that exhibited on the John Ritson exceeded. All were outraged at the condition of things, so different from what they had been led to anticipate at Panama. They continued to grow from bad to worse, and it was now seriously contemplated to relieve the officers from all further duty till we got to San Francisco. Neither cooks, stewards, or others, were under the least subordination, and managed matters to suit their own convenience; the captain never troubling himself about them, let things become ever

so desperate. When remonstrated with, his invariable reply was, that "things had not got regulated yet;" but this want of regulation attended us to the close of the voyage. The natural consequence was, that every thing was served in the most slovenly manner to the steerage, and at any hour; many being fortunate in procuring a mouthful to eat; while the dirty, musty, and half-boiled rice cooked in sea-water for the cabin, was set out on a table-cloth so filthy, that a servant at home would never have attempted to use it for wiping a greasy floor, without first rinsing it thoroughly. The very sight of it, apart from the unsavory odor it emitted, was sickening and disgusting!

The result of all this was, that the greatest waste occurred, and we found ourselves six hundred miles from land short of water, and with no other provisions than a little brown flour and musty rice on board. Captain H., who had proved an efficient volunteer in attending to the wants of his fellow-passengers, as far as he was able, was therefore appointed to take charge of these, and furnish daily rations of the meagre fare to every man; and had it not been that we were drawing towards the close of our long and tedious voyage, the vessel herself would probably have been taken out of the hands of her commander. He had proved himself totally incompetent to have charge of a passenger-ship. She was in a filthy condition when we first came on board, and the necessity of at once correcting this evil was pointed out, but our advice was disregarded. Had we not taken this matter in hand ourselves, and been extremely cautious to have the ship thoroughly cleansed and fumigated with tar, and daily sprinkled with a solution of chloride of lime, while in the low hot latitudes, an epidemic must in a few days have broken out, that would have resulted most disastrously, and probably have carried off half our number. The fever which afflicted so many at that time, and from which three died, though in a measure the consequence originally of over-exertion superadded to atmospheric causes, was evidently infectious in its character. The absence of cleanliness everywhere observable on board, contributed in no small degree to the first impressions and subsequent attacks of the disease, which was only arrested by the prompt sanitory measures we adopted.

CHAPTER VII.

Our Sensations on a First View of Alta California.—Dismal Appearance of the Coast.—Fogs.—An Incident and a Luxury.—Coast between Saint Louis Obispo and San Miguel.—Proposition for an Enterprise.—High Sea.—A Beautiful Sight.—A Gale.—Liquid Fire.—Ocean in Flames.—Amusing Occurrences.—Point Pinos.—Pleasant Weather.—Terrific Hail Storm.—A Paradise.—Off the Bay of San Francisco.—The Chrysopyle.—Magnificent Scene.—Bird Island.—Anchor in the Bay of San Francisco.

On the eleventh of May, hungry and shivering with cold, and wrapped up in all the coats and blankets we could lay hands on, we had the first view of the coast of Alta California. It had a cheerless, bleak, and desolate look, to which the hazy, damp, and chilly atmosphere greatly contributed, as with a stiff breeze and heavy sea we ran to within half a mile of the rugged and rock-bound shore. The land in view was near San Louis Obispo, which stands a few miles in the interior. So dense had been the fog latterly, that, even when four hundred miles at sea, vision was restricted to within half a mile around the vessel, but as we approached the coast it was somewhat dissipated. We sailed to within three miles, of what in clear weather could have been distinguished at thirty miles distance, before the land was seen.

Soon "ready about" sounds along the decks, and we fly off in an opposite direction.

A little incident occurred to-day, which I think worth recording. A man was seen on the quarter-deck with a dried herring in one hand and a slice of uncooked ham in the other, that alternately were carried to his mouth in a most voracious manner! He was at once surrounded, to know whence these heretofore unknown luxuries were obtained. We soon learned that two steerage passengers were the fortunate owners of a box of Scotch herring and a ham, small portions of which they were retailing at enormous prices. Quick as thought they were besieged, and realized handsome profits on their small investment, for fortunate was he who procured a herring, as they made no unsavory addition to our brown biscuit.

The following morning we again stood in for the shore; and the green verdure of the lofty hills, and the bright yellow flowers which decked the long stretches of meadow-land, tinged by the meridian sun as we approached, presented so attractive and inviting a landscape that some half a dozen of us made a proposition to the captain to be put ashore here, that we might proceed by land to San Francisco. The point was about midway between San Louis Obispo and San Miguel, our intention being to proceed to either of these places on foot, where it was supposed horses or mules could be purchased, by which we would be enabled to see the country, and pass through Monterey on our route, feeling confident of reaching San Francisco before the vessel. The proposal was assented to, and arms, ammunition, and all that was requisite for

such an expedition, were quickly got ready, but as we drew near the coast, the surf ran so high, and the wind blew so furiously from the shore, that the captain deemed it unsafe to risk our disembarkation, fearful that his boat would be upset or stranded on the beach. Most reluctantly, therefore, we were compelled to abandon the enterprise for a more auspicious occasion, if such should present.

"Ready about" was the cry, as we bid adieu to the shore, and dashed into the open sea. A short time thereafter we descried a small brigantine standing on the same tack with ourselves. As the wind was freshening and the waves running mountains high, it was a most interesting sight to watch her from our decks. Sometimes she would seem to be almost engulfed by the waters, and anon she would bound forward, riding high on the top of an immense wave, displaying her broadside, coppered bottom, and keel to view, and fairly leaping from the ocean, which instantly would again conceal all but a speck of her white canvas as she sunk into the yawning chasm made by the rolling sea. It was a beautiful sight. The breeze continued to freshen, and by evening it was found necessary to close reef all the topsails. It was well that this precaution was adopted, for heavy lowering clouds had for some time portended a storm, and it soon whistled a gale, producing a melancholy, wailing sound through the ropes and shrouds as we plunged forward amid the howling billows. As the darkness increased the spectacle was grand beyond conception, for as wave succeeded wave, rolling past and around us, they presented the appearance of liquid fire, while far away in the black night sheets of flame would seem to start up from crested waves, which fell off in brilliant sparkles, subsiding into the surrounding sea. Our bark rode gracefully and majestically, rising and sinking in gallant style with the heaving billows. The wind sighed and whistled through her rigging, and the waves dashed and roared against her sides as she ploughed her way over the foaming deep, scattering the bright scintillations far and wide, and apparently sailing in an ocean of flame. *

By morning the fury of the gale was spent, but a heavy sea and strong head-wind still continued to throw the spray high into the air, and sluice the decks from stem to stern. Most of the passengers were lounging in the sun, as the atmosphere was intensely keen and nipping, and many an unlucky wight caught it, to the uproarious delight of those who escaped the drenching. Many a poor fellow lost his only hat or cap to-day.

On the 16th, we ran towards Point Pinos. The coast a few miles below was immensely high and precipitous, rising nearly perpendicular from the water's edge, topped by a few giant-like and desolate-looking pines. The mountains beyond, serried by deep chasms and ravines, looked very imposing and very grand, but, with the exception of slight patches of green verdure, very dark and very bleak.

* This phosphorescence of the ocean, I had repeatedly witnessed in tropical latitudes, but never to the same extent as on this occasion. It is mainly attributable to the luminous light of the various tribes of medusæ, the gelatinous molluscæ, and other analogous bodies, which in countless numbers rest on the waves or float beneath the surface. A volume has been written on this subject.—See, "Animalcula Infusoria fluviatilia et marina," by *Muller*.

On the following day we crossed the outlet of the open roadstead at Monterey. The air had an agreeable warmth, not unlike a spring day at home, and a humming-bird flew across the deck, giving evidence of a land of sunshine and flowers. In the afternoon we had a rain, a squall, and a brilliant sunset, and in the evening a terrific hail-storm, with loud crashes of thunder and vivid lightning. It seemed strange to us, that all this should occur at such a season of the year, so near the Paradise we had been accustomed to think and read of.

The morning of the 18th opened beautifully, over the California hills. There were several vessels in sight, and the land looked most inviting. All wore an animated and cheerful aspect. Congratulations were interchanged and a smile lit up every countenance, so happy and joyous were all to have the prospect of a speedy delivery from their thralldom. We were now off the entrance to the Bay of San Francisco, though becalmed. Soon heavy clouds began to appear. The atmosphere became hazy and murky, and a damp, cold, unpleasant wind drove us forward. At half-past five o'clock, P. M., we reached the narrowest part of the entrance, termed the "Chrysopyle," or "Golden Gate," when suddenly the brilliant beams of the declining sun broke forth from what had hitherto been a dull and leaden sky. The effect on our spirits was most cheering, and on the landscape very beautiful. The distance from shore to shore was about two miles On either hand were bright green knolls rising abruptly from the margin of the water in the form of calcareous rock at the base, and terminating in peaks, whose gradually sloping and gracefully rounded sides, wore an appearance of the richest velvety verdure. Myriads of water-fowl floated round us. The whole character of the entrance, with the noble bay stretching out in front, studded with islands, on which the last rays of the departing sun yet lingered, was very striking; all description of it failing to convey to the mind an adequate impression of its beauty and magnificence.

Having passed this truly *Golden Gate*, and rounded the point opposite the little globular Bird Island, so called from the quantity of water-fowl that are constantly resting on or floating over it, and the deposit of guano that has whitened its surface, we ran into the harbor. The brig Col. Fremont, arrived at the same time, having sailed from Baltimore a few days before we left, and among a fleet of a hundred vessels, we cast anchor off the *celebrated* town of San Francisco. Now such a shouting and cheering as arose from the two vessels, was enough to have startled the inhabitants on shore, if such noises had not been familiar to their ears.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Town of Wood and Muslin.—Deserted Ships.—California Prices.—A Scuffle to get on Shore.—Famished Voyagers.—High-Pressure System.—Blasphemy, Gold, and Gambling.—Camp on Shore.—Desertion of Crew.—Death of Captain.—Climate of San Francisco contrasted with Benicia and Sancolito.

The town in front of us consisted of tents and scattered frame-tenements, a few presenting quite a neat and cottage-like aspect, either resting in the amphitheatre made by the surrounding barren-looking hills, or picturesquely perched on their sides. The question which was very forcibly suggested to the mind at first view was, what commercial inducements could such a mean and insignificant-looking place as this present, to bring together such a forest of masts as the harbor disclosed? We soon learned that every vessel which had arrived since the first discovery of gold in the country, was quickly deserted by its crew, and left to idly swing at its cable's length; however anxious the captains or owners might be to depart, it was impossible to man a ship with a sufficient number to work her to the nearest port. The wages for even a common laborer in the town were higher per day than a sailor was accustomed to receive monthly.

Desirous to see a place offering so many attractions, and to again step foot on *terra firma*, some half a dozen of us engaged one of the boats that were quickly along side, and were at once indoctrinated with California prices, a trip of a quarter of a mile costing us twelve dollars. Arrived at the shore, each seemed anxious to be the first to step foot on the soil, and in the eagerness and haste which followed, some measured their length on the sand, and others were knocked sprawling into the bottom of the boat; and amid many merry peals of laughter, we climbed the steep and rugged hill, proceeded to the post-office, and sought a cook-shop. Long abstinence had sharpened the appetite, for we were almost famished, and did full justice to the beefsteak, bread, butter, and coffee that were set before us.

The state of affairs here we found to be on the high-pressure principle, and truly anomalous. Without going into lengthened details, it will suffice to state that unoccupied ground, thought to be in an eligible location, met with ready sale and at higher rates, than the same amount would bring in the most business parts of any of the great cities of the union. Pistols were fired in rapid succession in every direction. Horses with their drunken riders were dashing through the town, the gay *serapa* and other gaudy trappings flying in the wind. Blasphemous oaths were heard on all sides. The vice of gambling prevailed to an enormous extent. Immense piles of gold, in its natural state and in coin, could be seen heaped upon the numerous monte and roulette tables. Owing to the high rents which the proprietors of these places are able

and willing to pay, it has contributed to give a fictitious value to property. Most of the titles to land sold or leased being of the same character, I have known as many as six claimants for one lot. A revulsion will come, and much litigation must ensue.

The next day was chiefly occupied in removing our baggage from the vessel to an outside spot we had selected for camping on, where, protected from the northwest winds that prevail, but overlooking the town and bay, we pitched our tents. In the afternoon we were visited by the ship's crew, all having deserted to a man, during the temporary absence of the captain; he and the first mate, with two small boys, being all that were left to take charge of the "John Ritson." Nor was this all, for the poor captain himself was drowned in the bay on the succeeding night, in endeavoring to recover an oar which had fallen overboard from a small boat, in which he and another were quitting the beach. He had often said during the passage, that many on board would leave their bones in California. Poor fellow, he was the first to fulfil his augury. It was a sad termination to his voyage, and though few had cause for kindly remembrances, yet all grieved at his melancholy fate.

The climate of San Francisco we found any thing but agreeable. In the forepart of the day, the sun was intensely hot, but from eleven or twelve o'clock, a cold raw northwest wind, would set in from the ocean, which by night would nearly amount to a gale, scattering the fine particles of dust and sand in every direction. This would often be attended with a thick heavy fog, which made the nights most disagreeable. By sundown all would be calm, but the atmosphere was chilly and unpleasant. The transition from the heat of the morning to the cool of the evening, was frequently so sudden and unexpected, that those not familiar to the climate, were often in situations where they could not make the change of clothing that was requisite; and severe colds, not unfrequently settling upon the lungs, were apt to be the result of these exposures. I noticed that all who had any tendency to disease of the chest, suffered during their stay in San Francisco, Nor was I surprised at this; but it will cause me much more surprise to learn, that many who have never been afflicted with pulmonary complaints, have not here laid the foundation of incurable consumption. Some instances of this latter came under my observation during my brief continuance there. The wretched, brackish water from the wells at San Francisco is another objection to the place, as it is very liable to cause serious and fatal mischief. The mortality from dysenteric complaints during the past summer and fall, was truly frightful, and almost every one, even among the older residents, during those months, suffer from this cause.

Upon the whole, in a medical point of view, I would not regard San Francisco as the most desirable locality for a large commercial city, which the requirements of our great western continent will so soon demand, and the emigration there will so soon call into existence. The positions of Benicia or Sancolito would be far preferable in this respect, while their other advantages would be equal if not superior to those of San Francisco. The latter of the two certainly presents many inducements to the enterprising capitalist, while the former, from its

being the point of our naval station, must always hold a prominent place. Sancolito, situated on a beautiful little bay of that name, within the northern termination of the entrance from the sea, is admirably shielded from the northwest winds which prevail at San Francisco, and the harbor itself is even superior to the latter, vessels of the largest class being able to anchor close to the shore, in a position of the most perfect security, while here is their main reliance for obtaining supplies of good water. These advantages must in time tell on its prosperity, and though a powerful impulse has been given to San Francisco, I should greatly prefer the position of Sancolito for a residence, and doubt not but it will eventually become, if not *the city*, one of the great cities of the Pacific.

CHAPTER IX.

Start for the Sacramento.—Packing in a Launch.—Eating One's Self.—Golden Rock.—Adventures in Pursuit of Eggs.—Dangerous Situation.—Brothers and Sisters.—Straits of Pablo.—Bay of Sonoma.—Straits of Karquines.—Sleeping on Board.—Breakfast on Shore.—Reminiscences of Schooner Sovereign.—A Pleasant Walk.—Benicia.—A Naval Station.—Suisan Bay.—A Famous City.—Its Advantages to Miners.—Enter the Sacramento.—Appearance of the Shores.—Sloughs.—Thulé Marshes.—Nurseries for Disease.—Mosquitoes.—Tramp through a California Thicket.—Barber's Ranch.—A Philosopher.—Indian Rancheria.—Wild Geese and Ducks.—Sierra Nevada.—Suttersville.—Embarcadero.

Desirous of freeing ourselves from the motley crowd around us, consisting of the natives of almost every clime, with a smart sprinkling of convicts from New South Wales, we struck our tent from the hill-side, and embarked for the Sacramento on board a small schooner or launch, rejoicing in the name of "Susannetta." Our number consisted of thirty-five, including the crew of four men, and huddled together on this little vessel, already stowed full without ourselves and baggage, we started across the bay. Having to provide our own fare, or, as one of the party facetiously expressed it, "to eat ourselves," and sleep on deck, or among the mosquitoes of the thulé marshes on shore, we were kindly accommodated with a passage on this diminutive craft, for all which privileges we were permitted to pay the sum of twenty-five dollars apiece.

After a few hours sailing before a pleasant westerly breeze, we approached a small island called *Golden Rock*, from the color of the soil. The sides were nearly perpendicular from the water's edge, and were covered with thousands of water-fowl. Here several of our adventurous spirits expressed a desire to go ashore in pursuit of eggs, which are found in great numbers. This request was readily acceded to, by our obliging captain promising to lay to till their return. Not caring to make one of the party, I remained on board and watched their proceedings. They suffered considerably for their sport, having to climb

steep banks of loose red sand, dust, and feathers, in which at each step they would sink to the knee, and, with nothing to hold by, were momentarily threatened with a plunge into the ocean below. Having with much toil and no little trepidation accomplished their object, by obtaining half a score of most singularly colored and mishapen eggs in their basket, they prepared to return. Here again they were doomed to trouble, for the strong northwest wind from the ocean having set in, and the surf running very high, their little boat shipped much water, and was on the eve of capsizing as they came along side, glad enough to step foot on deck, and vowing not to be again caught in such a scrape. Apart from their dangers by land and water, the fine guano-dust of the island had nearly suffocated them, and each looked like a terrified red Indian, who had just been subjected to the administration of a plentiful coating of tar and feathers.

Continuing our course we passed the four rocks called Brothers and Sisters, at the entrance to the Straits of Pablo, which unites the Bay of San Francisco, properly so called, to Pablo Bay, or Bay of Sonoma. Crossing this we entered the Straits of Karquines. The tide turning against us, about nine o'clock we cast anchor under a bold bluff, near the shore of the Straits, and prepared to pass the night as best we could. The air was cold and disagreeable, and with our blankets closely wrapped around us, we threw ourselves on the deck, in the first vacant space that presented; some were compelled to make pillows of their neighbors, but all slept soundly till "the peep o' day."

The morning had scarcely opened, when "all hands tumble up" was the cry, and we continued our course till we arrived at a suitable landing-place, and again cast anchor, when "all hands" went ashore with their cooking utensils to prepare breakfast. Fires were soon lighted on the gravelly beach at the foot of a lofty hill, and savory odors streamed forth from pot, kettle, and skillet. My own party had the advantage of others, in possessing Jimmy, the ever-famous and never-to-be-forgotten Jimmy, colored steward of the schooner Sovereign, who with the captain and mate had accompanied us thus far, the vessel having returned to "the States" in charge of a friend, whom the captain met at Chagres. Poor Jimmy, he had a sad time of it on the Pacific; for from the moment of our leaving Taboga, till after the "old man" departed this mortal life, the villainous fever hung about him, which had afflicted so many, and often did he say to me, "Ah doctor, I'll be the next to go overboard!" With much care, however, he recovered, and was now equal to the task of cooking a breakfast with any. We found him quite an acquisition, and never will I forget poor Jimmy, with his broad-brimmed hat, big eyes, and sober-looking phiz.

After discussing the goodly mixtures of the aforesaid Jimmy, a party of us, each armed with gun or rifle, started off on a stroll over the hills, which were here high and beautifully rolling, and covered with wild oats, intending to join the vessel about ten miles further up, opposite Benicia. The walk was delightful, and we enjoyed it beyond measure. In the distance we could see the timid antelopes grazing on the hill-side, but as there were few trees to conceal us from observation, we could not come near enough for a shot. We also encountered a wolf in one of the

dark, deep ravines we penetrated, and from a thicket startled two deer, which bounded off at our approach.

Having regained the vessel, we continued our course through the straits, to where the town of Benicia had been commenced. Here were many tents and a few frame-tenements dotting the extensive plain, but without a shrub or tree visible. The U. S. ship Warren was lying in the harbor, and we seemed to be objects of special interest to her crew. Doubtless many of them would have been glad of an opportunity to desert, and be off to the "diggings." At this point a naval station is proposed. Passing from the beautiful little cove, into the extensive but shallow waters of Suisan Bay, we ran too close to the shore, out of the channel, when our vessel struck, and we found ourselves stranded in the mud. It now became necessary to send a line ashore, about half-a-mile in advance of our position, to pull her off. With much toil, and after a detention of several hours, it was at length accomplished. Whilst engaged in this work, a brig, crowded with passengers, came sailing onward, and bang she went, being raised three feet. We left her sticking fast in the mud.

By the middle of the afternoon we came opposite to a tract of land, barren and desolate enough to look upon, rising in swells like the waves of the ocean, with Mount Diablo towering far above it, but without a house or tent visible, known to fame as "New-York of the Pacific!" It is situated near the mouth of the San Joaquin, which waters the southern country, and nearly opposite one of the mouths of the Sacramento, and is intended for a city, lots being now sold on paper at high rates to the miners, many of whom having more gold than they had heretofore been accustomed to, are often anxious to make a safe investment of a few hundred dollars in real estate. Here the opportunity is presented, the happy purchaser doubtless congratulating himself on the fortunate turn of events, that had enabled him to dig gold from the earth and invest it in permanent town-lots, where it can not be *lost*.

The bay in this vicinity is studded with little flat islands overgrown with brushwood, formerly frequented by numerous bands of beavers, where trappers from the Hudson Bay Company were accustomed to resort in pursuit of these industrious little animals. Threading our way among these, we crossed to the opposite side and entered the mouth of the Sacramento. A few miles further on, we came to what is termed a "slough," or lateral branch, passing on again to the main branch, through which we sailed, lessening the distance by many miles.

I was greatly surprised and disappointed with the Sacramento. The shores were flat and marshy, being overgrown with thulé, a kind of light cane, while few trees of any size were to be seen. As we advanced, however, they became more numerous and larger, consisting chiefly of scraggy oak and sycamore, the boughs often fringed with a light fleecy kind of mistletoe and other parasitical plants. For many miles from its entrance into Suisan Bay, the country is cut up with "sloughs," and extensive thulé marshes are the consequence; fit nurseries for disease, which prevails here to an alarming extent during the latter part of summer, and in the fall months, when the water is

low. I can conceive of no part of the Mississippi valley more prolific of disease, than the valley of the Sacramento must be.

Towards evening we ran into the shore among the canes, and soon had flaming fires kindled with the dried thulé and what little wood we could discover. These served in some degree to dispel the damp night air while supper was being cooked, and the smoke answered a good purpose in keeping at bay the innumerable swarms of mosquitoes which almost drove us mad. These insects are a pest to the land, thousands lighting upon you at once. Handkerchiefs were in constant motion, slapping the face and hands to gain a moment's respite from their venomous bites. Unless a strong wind blew, which was sometimes the case, sleeping was next to impossible, for even with head, face, and hands covered, the blood-thirsty villains would manage to get under our blankets, and annoy us almost to death. By the time we reached the termination of our cruise, most of us presented the appearance of a recent recovery from small-pox.

After a frugal meal on the following morning, a party of us determined to go ashore and walk some fifteen or twenty miles higher up, and there await the arrival of the vessel. Her progress was necessarily slow, for the windings of the stream were continually changing her course, which was also much impeded by the strong currents and eddies at these places. We therefore had no fear of being left behind, even if we should be delayed in the pursuit of game. Accordingly we shouldered our arms, and sallied forth for a tramp in a California thicket, and such a tramp as it proved, we care not to repeat. The sun was intensely, fiery hot, and not a breath of air was stirring. The walking was through tangled underbrush, among dense and almost impenetrable thulé swamps and across streams, which sometimes were difficult to pass, while the whole atmosphere was alive with myriads of mosquitoes which tortured us beyond endurance. After walking half the distance we had proposed, and beginning to experience that sort of feeling which induced some of the party to inquire earnestly if the dinner-hour had not arrived, we gladly paused under a welcome shade on the shore of the stream. Having been unsuccessful in finding game, we here concluded to beguile the time by expending our surplus powder in firing at a target, and soon the crack of our rifles echoed through the air. This became dull work to craving appetites, as hour after hour elapsed, and the "Susannetta" came not. Fearing she had passed us at some point below, we continued our course, and in a mile or two saw a vessel aground on one of the many sand-bars, which, with the snags, render the navigation of this river so uncertain and unfit for sailing-vessels. As on the Pacific, steamers only are here applicable, and I hope to see the day when none others will float on our waters. Two or three were in process of construction then at Benicia and San Francisco, intended for the navigation of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, the timber and machinery having been brought "round the Horn."

A few miles beyond this, we came to a miserable-looking log-hut, dignified with the title of "Barber's Ranch." It was tenanted by an old man and his two sons, the former of whom we found lying under a rude sort of mosquito bar, to protect him from the bites of the millions that surrounded him. He received us kindly, but we could not persuade

the old man to part with one of the three loaves of bread we saw, though we had eaten nothing since morning. He showed us a kind of garden, containing some scrubby-looking vegetables, one or two of the radishes from which we laid violent hands upon, to allay the cravings of hunger, for we begun to be almost famished. When asked how he could endure to live here, in the midst of swarms of mosquitoes, he replied, "the height of the mosquito season had not come on yet, but that he had got used to them, and they did not trouble him!" Procuring a boat from this philosopher, we crossed the river to a small Indian encampment a little higher up, but were here as unsuccessful as before. They were a poor, miserable, squalid, dirty-looking set, and most of them seemed to be suffering from disease of some sort. We noticed many whose persons were hideously distorted from rheumatism. A rather intelligent white man among them informed us that the best part of the band were out on a hunting expedition, and would not return for some days. Finding little to interest and nothing to eat here, we returned to what we now learned was an island, the slough reuniting at this point with the main channel, which passed off in another direction. About sunset the "Susannetta" came up, and we were rejoiced to get on board. As usual, we ran into the shore at night and kindled our fires for supper, which we devoured with the avidity of cormorants, and then, wrapped in our blankets, laid down our weary limbs to——fight the mosquitoes!

On the following morning the river was lined for miles in extent, with innumerable quantities of wild ducks and geese. These afforded capital sport for some of our marksmen, the unerring aim of one especially, invariably bringing down his game. We entered into this with much relish, for the savory odors of roast duck reveled in our fancies, and the number shot was no mean addition to our larder.

As we ascended the river, the shores were higher, and the trees larger and more numerous. Beyond these, however, few were to be seen, the eye resting on nothing but extensive fields of thulé marshes. In the afternoon we occasionally caught a view of some of the loftiest peaks of the Sierra Nevada, covered, as their name imports, with a mantle of snow. Towards evening we passed an Indian encampment, and soon thereafter came in sight of Suttersville, consisting of a few frame-houses and tents. As night drew on, we landed at the "Embarcadero," formerly "Nueva Helvetia," now Sacramento City. This terminated our voyage, and here we pitched our tents.

CHAPTER X.

Sacramento City.—Overflow of the Rivers.—Gold-Washers.—A Curious and Motley Crowd.—Successful Miners.—Disorganized State of Society.—A Singular Occurrence.—Preparation for the Mines.—Ox Team.—A Start.—Sutter's Fort—Sandy Plain.—Ferry at the American River.—What happened there.—Sinclair's Ranch.—Fremont's Expedition.—Brilliant Moon.—Bath in American River.—Its Swiftness.—Lovely Morning.—Oppressive Heat.—Wild Flowers.—Desolate Landscape.—Picturesque Camp.—A Thieving Indian.—Coyotes.—Toil-worn Comrades.—Fine Views.—Lonely and Cheerless Scene.—What to believe in California.—Arrival at the Dry Diggings.

THE position of Sacramento City is at the junction of the American River with the Sacramento. It is situated on a broad, extensive flat, where a park of fine old oaks rear their giant arms. They extend some distance from the river, on the route to Sutter's Fort, which stands on a plain about two miles off. At our first visit, it consisted of a few stores and houses, the latter mostly made of muslin covering the frame, boards being too high and difficult to get. As at San Francisco, lots were selling at enormous rates, and rapidly changing hands at a daily advance. The location is not so desirable as at Suttersville, or Sutter, to use the more modern synonym. The waters of the Sacramento and American rivers rise to a great height during the rainy season, and overflowing the banks, inundate the country for miles. This was the case during the winter of 1848–9, when many told me they had sailed in boats over the spot where Sacramento City now stands nearly to Sutter's Fort. Should this be a common occurrence, many, if not most of the houses, will be swept away and float down stream, and the lot-owners will have to resort to the method formerly practiced in Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio, and search for their localities with a long pole! The town of Sutter, which is very prettily situated, stands higher, the background rising in swells to a considerable elevation, and I was told, had never been subjected to these submergings.

Little of interest occurring during our short stay here, many of the party engaged in the manufacture of gold-washers preparatory for a start to the mines. As I did not contemplate entering on the vocation of digger, I had little to do with these preliminaries, contenting myself with noting the various and singular characters, which from every clime were here brought suddenly into intimate companionship. It was a curious crowd. Mexicans, Peruvians, Chilians, and Sonorians; English, Irish, French, Dutch, Russians, and Swedes; with Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands, and representatives from the Celestial Empire, were here, with the universal Yankee and native Californian, collected together, as it were in a day, by the powerful attraction of gold. Some who had recently returned with a few hundred dollars, after what they considered a successful visit to the mines, were most lavish in its

expenditure. Paying enormous prices for all they bought, they were ever ready to "treat all hands," and from their leathern purses would weigh out their three or four ounces with the most lordly nonchalance. Gambling prevailed to a great extent, and that which had cost the poor miner many a week or month of the severest toil man can endure, was swept from him in an hour. Debauchery and blasphemy were the concomitants of this vice, and the most revolting oaths that ever fell from human lips, seemed to pass as household words in California. It might be supposed that frequent conflicts, and scenes of violence and bloodshed, would constantly occur as a natural result of this disorganized state of society. Such was not the case however, but one act of lawless violence having occurred, the offender at once delivering himself up to the punishment due to his crime. Theft was of rare occurrence. We were disposed to account for this from the fact that every man was armed, and a degree of restraint was thus imposed, which caused each to respect his neighbor's rights. Where it had happened some time previously, in one or two instances, the immediate death of the thief was the consequence.

Whilst here, I was waited upon by two men, one of whom walked into my tent with his mouth wide open. I learned he had been on a drunken frolic, and whooping and yelling as such characters are apt to do on these occasions, had fallen and dislocated his lower jaw. This I was soon enabled to replace, much to the man's delight, and with many protestations and thanks for the relief afforded, he promise to call upon me in the afternoon for a settlement of my bill, but I never saw him afterward.

Having remained here long enough to complete our preparations, we engaged a team of ten oxen to convey our luggage some seventy-five miles up the country. This cost us thirty dollars per one hundred pounds, making the expense for two parties of fifteen persons amount to the round sum of seven hundred dollars. We, among others, fell into the error of taking more than was necessary to the mines. One strong suit, with a change of under-clothing, blankets, and the necessary tools for mining operations, are all that are requisite, as such provisions as the country affords can be obtained at any of the stores, established in every direction in the vicinity of the mines, and those who cannot put up with the privations and hardships incident to a life of this sort, had better stay at home. The mines of California are no places for them.

We started forward in the afternoon, intending to walk as far as the ferry at the American River some eight or nine miles distant, and there await the arrival of our team. The first part of the way was over the intervening space between the town and fort, where we saw herds of cattle, horses, and mules grazing, either belonging to a ranch near by, or the property of some of the settlers. We never saw wild horses in California, nor wild cattle, unless they can be so called which have owners at the different ranches throughout the country. Pausing a few moments at "Sutter's Fort," a rude mud edifice, we continued our way over a sandy, arid, and unfruitful plain to the American River. Here we arrived towards evening, nearly choked with the dust which constantly enveloped us, and smarting under the attacks of the innumerable quantity of mosquitoes that ever hovered around us.

In a little time thereafter, we descried our team "winding its slow length along." Nearing the ferry, the wheels sunk to the hubs in the deep mud and sand, and we found it necessary to remove the greater part of the load, before they could be extricated. This of course consumed some time, and night came on before it was accomplished, and the wagon could be driven on to the flat. It was no sooner there, however, than confusion arose. The boat was on the point of capsizing, the oxen became restive, and a pair yoked together fell overboard. This righted the vessel, and they were none the worse for their ducking, but safely gained the opposite shore, being carried by the swift current some half a mile below. The rest with the wagon were safely gotten over. Here hitching to again, with a man at each wheel, it was dragged up the short, but nearly perpendicular hill to the plain above. Near by stood "Sinclair's Ranch," the last house it was said, we would meet with on the way.

Selecting a suitable spot, we pitched our tents on the open plain, and walked to the ranch, a kind of private house for public entertainment, and ordered supper. This consisted of boiled fresh beef, sour bread, and bad coffee, for which we each paid one dollar. Here we saw one of Fremont's men, who had escaped with a remnant of the party, from his late trying and most disastrous expedition across the mountains, when so many of the number were either starved or frozen to death. The poor fellow had a toil-worn and broken-down appearance.

In the course of the evening, lighted by a brilliant moon, we enjoyed a delicious bath in the icy-cold water of the river, removing all the dust and dirt of the afternoon's travel, and preparing us, by the fresh invigorating influence it imparted, for the prosecution of our journey on the following day. The water, coming with arrowy swiftness direct from the melting snow of the Sierra Nevada, was cold as ice itself, and clear as crystal. This does not continue, however, for as the summer advances it becomes a very inconsiderable stream, and I have forded it when the water was warm and unpleasant to the taste, and scarcely covered my horse's fetlock.

The first of June was a lovely morning. The translucent atmosphere was soft and balmy, and the sky beautifully blue. We started early to avoid the heat of the day; for experience had taught us that this delightful air we now inhaled, would become in a few hours like the steam from a furnace. As the day advanced, the rays of the sun were most oppressive, with but little shade to protect us from his beams. After walking for about sixteen miles, without a drop of water to allay our burning thirst, over a parched and arid plain, occasionally relieved by a few trees or shrubs, interspersed with some wild flowers, as if in mockery of the desolate landscape, we reached the valley of a small stream. Here we tarried for some time, partaking of a little refreshment and enjoying a most comfortable and refreshing nap beneath the welcome shade. In the afternoon we continued our weary way over the same description of country, the loose soil and fine dust making the travel exceedingly toilsome and unpleasant. As we occasionally mounted a slight elevation above the surrounding plain, we could see for miles in extent the hot and lonely path yet to be traversed. Many of the party were overcome with fatigue, and exhausted for want of

water, before we reached our camping-ground for the night; and with difficulty some of them were brought in. The spot selected was a deep dell, the sides in many parts composed of overhanging rocks, in the clefts of which grew pines and cedars, wild and picturesque to view, while at the bottom gurgled a fine spring of water, overshadowed by the branches of some gnarled oaks. Here seated around our camp-fires, we made repeated and desperate attacks on stewed jerked-beef, bread, and coffee, The spirits of all were refreshed, as the laugh and the jest went round, and no further complaints were heard from our toil-worn comrades. We pitched our tents, and were soon in a deep sleep. From this we were aroused, in the middle of the night, by the barking of a dog belonging to one of the party. We soon ascertained that he was in pursuit of a man, whose figure was distinctly seen running from the camp, as he emerged from the dark dell into the bright moonlight. Quick as thought, half-a-dozen bullets whistled after him. But the range was too long, and he was suffered to escape. He was supposed to be a thieving Indian, as they were known to prowl about in the night time, in the vicinity of camps, to practice their propensity for stealing horses. We were undisturbed the rest of the night, except that the coyotes or prairie-wolves kept up an incessant angry barking around us, but not sufficient to break our slumbers. We arose refreshed, and ready for an early march.

As the day wore on, many of the party were compelled to mount the wagon, being foot-sore, and overcome with fatigue and heat. I was peculiarly fortunate in being exempt from all these annoyances, and believe I was nearly the only one who did not suffer in some way. The travel was peculiarly irksome, and the heat often very intense, but I usually felt as fresh at the close as at the beginning of the day.

As we continued to advance, the country assumed a much more mountainous character, and we had to climb long, steep, and toilsome hills. From the tops of these we had many very fine views of the far-off, hot, and misty-looking valleys below us, and the snow-capped peaks of the lofty Sierra Nevada in front. The hills around were covered with pine, cedar, and fir trees, and had a wild, lonely aspect, and a peculiarly cheerless and desolate look as the shades of evening approached. No sign of bird or animal was anywhere visible. As usual we had a nooning, and at night encamped in a thick wood adjacent to a spring.

The next day we tramped on, "over the hills and far away." Little game had been seen since we started. One hare was taken, much larger than the rabbits or hares found in the United States. An antelope was chased, and a doe and fawn were seen, but too far off and skittish for a shot.

To-day we met several returning from the mines. They gave a dismal account of the state of affairs there, which none of our party were disposed to believe. It is a remarkable and probably a commendable trait in the character of our go-ahead countrymen, to admit no statement contrary to their preconceived opinions, till by personal observation they have proved its truth or falsity. On our first arrival in California, we were told to believe *nothing* we heard, and only *half* we saw! We were soon to have an opportunity of verifying the contra-

dictory stories that everywhere met us on the way, according as the parties who made them had been successful or otherwise.

Towards evening we came upon the "Dry Diggings," so called in contradistinction to the gold-washings on the bars of the rivers. Selecting a very pleasant camping-ground, on the borders of a small stream in the valley, with rolling hills all around us, we here pitched our tents, and prepared to "bide our time."

CHAPTER XI.

The Gold-Seeker—His Successes and Reverses.—Heat of the Canons.—Rugged and Precipitous Passages.—What the Miner must Endure.—Who is Competent for This.—Turning the Streams.—Indians and Oregonians.—Effects of Misstatements.—Unprincipled Scribblers.—Monte Tables.—Groggeries.—Sickness of Miners.—Queer Characters.—Roving Parties.—Oregonians; their Opinions of the Soil, Climate, and Mines of California.—Ghosts of the Departed.

Arrived here, let me now introduce the reader to this part of the placer or gold mines.

At the bottom of steep rocky glens or ravines, through which a small stream flows, with banks so high and precipitous that you can not walk over them, except on the little dusty paths worn in their sides, and up to his knees in muddy water, with which his clothes are well bedabbled, plying a pickax or shovel, or rocking a washer, behold the gold-seeker! The sun pours his scorching rays upon his devoted head. Sometimes he will work, day after day and week after week, in a stooping posture, at as severe toil and great exposure as man ever felt or knew, and scarcely get a return for his labor. Again, he may chance upon a spot, where, without half the exertion, several hundred dollars' worth of gold may be found and washed out in the course of a single day. Such instances are rare, however. Whilst I was here, three drunken, worthless fellows, deserters from the army, with the uniform of "Uncle Sam" on their backs, happened on one of these rich "*gulches*" within a few yards of where other and more deserving men, with severe toil, scarcely realized any thing; so fickle is the blind goddess, and often so prosperous and apparently favored by fortune, are the dissolute and abandoned! These unworthy characters were nearly always intoxicated, and yet dug out their hundreds with hardly an effort.

On the rivers, shut in as they are by high, steep, rocky, and almost impassable hills, much sickness prevails among the miners during the summer and fall months. The latter is the most productive season, as the waters are then low, and the fine particles of gold deposited, can be reached and washed out of the sand, mud, and rocks, where they are found on the bars and in the bed of the streams. Scarcely a breath of air penetrates these deep *canons*, while the sun shines with unclouded fervor, frequently bringing the thermometer to 110° in the shade. This

to the miner, at his arduous and unaccustomed toil, is dreadfully severe, and almost necessarily results in brain-fever or a bilious-typhoid. Care and prudence could to some extent obviate these difficulties. But who is careful or who is prudent in the pursuit of gold in California?

While here, accompanied by another gentleman, I occasionally made some little excursions of a few miles over to the "North Fork," and into the deep canons of this river. Staking our horses at the first *plateau* in our descent, we toiled along the precipitous sides and rugged shore, to seek a better locality for his party. The water we found too high yet for extensive operations, and we gained nothing each time but a delightful bath, and a most toilsome scramble over the abrupt declivities. The sun was hot, but the water was like ice, coming as it does from the melting snow of the mountains, and darting along "like the swift current of the arrowy Rhone."

If I could convey to the reader an adequate conception of what a gold-seeker in California has to endure, it would scarcely be credited. Quarrying, the digging of canals, cellars, and wells, or all combined, are not capable of comparison with the intense hard labor, and almost unbearable privations he is compelled to undergo. None but a laboring man is fit for the business. He must have been inured to the most trying hardships from his earliest infancy, and have a constitution and frame of iron, to endure it for any length of time; sickness in some form often overtaking even the most robust, after a few week's toil. Many had been here since the preceding fall, and were no better off than on the day of their arrival. The majority leave with broken health and spirits, the consequence of exposure and privations to which they had been unaccustomed, and the utter prostration of all their brilliant hopes. A very few were repaid to some extent, the result however of mere chance, though judgment is requisite in selecting a proper locality for operations, and often they who toiled the most obtained the least. The close of a successful season, say from the latter part of July till November, when the waters are low in the rivers and the bars are exposed, finds some in the possession of from fifteen hundred to probably three or four thousand dollars' worth of gold. In rare instances, and I bestowed some care in the inquiry, had any one person been able to realize more than this. The attempt to turn the channel of the rivers, so as to get at the bed of the streams, was not attended with as fortunate results as many anticipated, the miners being seldom, though occasionally, rewarded for the severe labor of such an undertaking. Where an individual had obtained a party of Indians to work for some paltry pay, sums of ten, fifteen, or probably twenty thousand dollars, were collected through their agency. These times, however, had gone by, most of the Indians being driven by the Oregonians far into the fastnesses of the mountains, and a war of extermination was waged against them.

On a Sunday morning soon after my arrival, I was called to see an Indian whose head was shockingly cut by an Oregonian, a white man, whom he had accompanied into California. The man's tent was a short distance from mine, and I heard the shriek when the blow was struck. Some one had persuaded the Indian to leave his employer, and he was about doing so. To compel him to remain, the Oregonian, who had incurred expense on his account, struck him with some heavy

weapon and felled him to the earth. On the following day the man went in pursuit of another Indian, to shoot him, whom he charged with stealing his horse. The Oregonians, and an immense number were in California, were severe on all Indians, wherever they met a naked or wild one, unhesitatingly shooting him down. This may seem, and certainly is, unwarrantable. But the treachery and ruthless scenes they have witnessed on the part of the Indians themselves, both here and in Oregon, they think in a great measure justify such harsh retaliation; a solitary white man, they say, never escaping, if met by a party of red skins. Christian maxims and precepts are naught with the frontiermen.

Most whom I conversed with were disappointed, the true condition of things being so totally different from the accounts received at home. Letters full of grandiloquent statements, were put forth by individuals having no personal experience, and without correct knowledge of the truth of their assertions. Vague rumors, such as we on the spot were almost daily hearing, but in which we placed little confidence, were seized upon, and instantly some interested land-speculator, or unprincipled scribbler, would write home of mines of *untold* wealth, which it was only necessary to be here for any one to obtain his portion of, at the same time pointing out the cheapest and most expeditious route by which to come and secure the golden harvest. I sincerely pitied the thousands of fine young men who were here or on their way, with no other purpose than to dig gold. After a long, hazardous, toilsome, and expensive journey is completed, and they begin to imagine that all their trials and hardships are at end, and they are about to reap their reward, their troubles and labors have not even commenced. Soon their golden dreams are dissipated, and stern necessity compels them to some other employment than gold-hunting, to obtain the necessaries of life. In a far distant land, away from friends and home, and among many who are unprincipled, their cases are truly pitiable. Many of those who were of the party from San Francisco, left in a day or two, and returned to the settlements of the Sacramento, in order to obtain some more certain and less precarious mode of subsistence than the mines afforded.

The vices of gambling, drunkenness, and obscene oaths, were as prevalent here as elsewhere. Monte tables were constantly in operation about the little tent-stores and groggeries seated on the hill-side. The most useful articles vended at these places, were flour and salt or jerked meat. With these indispensables, and the luxuries of sugar and tea or coffee, the miner must be content, and happy is he, if at the close of a hard day's work he can muster sufficient resolution to cook his meal, and sit down under his tent to slap-jacks and fried pork. He must pay enormous prices for all he buys, and, unless success attends his efforts, he will find it difficult to keep body and soul together. Vegetables of any kind could not be had. A good deal of sickness prevailed, and my services were in great demand. The principal diseases that afflicted the miners were scurvy, rheumatism, dysentery; and brain, intermittent remittent, and continued fevers; these latter, in many cases, early assuming a typhoid character. Where the patients were brought under treatment soon after the attack, however, I did not, generally speaking, find their cases at all intractable. I did not vary the treatment from

ordinary cases at home, and had the satisfaction to lose none. Some, either from inability or disinclination to pay for medical attendance, chose to treat themselves. Death was often the consequence of this, or they were walking shadows for months, with impaired intellects, and rarely recovered their accustomed vigor. I never saw more broken-down constitutions than I witnessed during my stay in California, and few who work in the mines, ever carry home their usual full health.

There were some queer characters here. One man, whom I had bled at his request, thought he derived so much benefit from the operation, that he brought up his little Indian boy, and induced many others to submit to the same process. Sunday morning was usually the time selected by them for this purpose, so as not to interfere with their labors through the week. Though perfectly well, they would take no refusal, but insist on its performance, and as the charge was an ounce for each, I generally gratified them, and sometimes would have two or three bleeding around my tent at one time.

Sitting in front of my tent, which was a short distance from the road, I have often been surprised at the numbers constantly passing and repassing to and from the mines in different parts of the country. Cavalcades of fifty and a hundred, with their pack-mules bearing the gold-washer, tin-pan, pickax, shovel, and cooking utensils, could be seen. Among these, the sturdy Oregonians were readily distinguishable by their leather breeches fringed down the side, and the invariable rifle resting on the pommel of the saddle, and ready for instant service. I had frequent conversations with these men, and found them all intelligent and sensible, but generally uneducated. They spoke with the utmost contempt of the climate and soil of California, but in raptures of their beloved healthful Oregon, and of the rich verdure and cultivated fields of the lovely Willamette valley. Many had visited the mines in different sections of the country, not only on Juba, Feather, and Bear rivers, and on the middle and south fork of the American River, but on the Stanislaus and various tributaries of the San Joaquin, over a surface of several hundred miles in extent. They were continually roving from point to point. When asked if they would not be more successful to remain in one spot, their invariable reply was, that wherever they had been they heard richer mines spoken of further on, but that they had been unable to discover much difference in any. And so it was. Little reliance could be placed on the statements of any in California, relative to the mines. Parties were constantly moving from one place to another, restless and dissatisfied, or led on by the glowing accounts of some remote spot, where rumor, with her thousand tongues, placed immense deposits of the precious metal, which could be obtained with little labor and in vast quantities.

Remaining here about a month, the water in the ravines became so scarce as not to afford sufficient for the miner's use, and so unpleasant as not to be drinkable. Many were leaving for the more profitable washings on the rivers. A few remained, to pick and scratch with trowel and jack-knife, in the banks of the nearly dried-up rivulets, or among the rocks and pockets of the deep gulches. Some I found here nearly three months later, wandering about like ghosts of the departed.

CHAPTER XII.

Start for the Juba.—An Unfruitful Plain.—Oasis in the Desert.—A Romantic Dell.—Picturesque Scene.—Bear River.—Johnson's Ranch.—Civilized Indians.—A White Woman.—Indian Cruelties.—Sumptuous Feast.—Bath in Bear River.—Intense Heat.—Camping in the Woods.—Coyotes.—Their Thieving Propensities. Shores of the Juba.—Descent to the Stream.—A California Character.—Disgust of Miners.—Much Gold and Great Mortality.—Leave the Juba.—Encounter Digger Indians.—Camp on Bear River.—Animated Scene.—Delightful Morning.—Antelopes and Deer.—Return to Camp.

DESIROUS of witnessing the more extensive operations on the rivers, and to select a location where numbers were greatest, for the exercise of my professional pursuits, my friend M——, with two other gentlemen, accompanied me on an expedition some sixty miles distant, to the Juba. Strapping our blankets to the saddles, with haversacks well-filled with jerked-beef and biscuit, revolvers in belts, without coats, and our boots drawn over the pants, (California costume,) we sallied forth on our fleet steeds, ready "to drive through thick and thin."

The first six miles of the early morning ride, over hill and dale, through the woods, were refreshing and delightful. But as the day advanced, and the sun poured down his fiery rays, we emerged into an open, sandy plain, apparently limitless in extent in one direction, and about thirty miles across to some mountain peaks just visible, where our course pointed. Scarcely a tree or blade of grass grew on the wide expanse. The ground was parched, and the whole aspect of the scene was dreary and desolate. It made one feel hot and uncomfortable to contemplate it. Starting at a canter, or "lope," we dashed forward, and after a ride of about ten miles came to a kind of "oasis in the desert." A clump of trees overshadowed a romantic-looking dell, at the bottom of which water was visible, the remains of a small, nearly dried-up stream, and a most cheering sight. Parting the thick branches we descended on horseback to the spot, and suddenly found ourselves in a cool, pleasant retreat, beneath the arborous shade of trees and clinging vines, and confronted by about twenty Chilanoes, lounging about, who like ourselves had sought refuge from the heat of the plain, in this traveler's rest. Most of these people, together with the Mexicans, Peruvians, and other foreigners on the Pacific coast, had been driven from the mines in every direction, hardly sufficient time in some instances being allowed them to remove their mining tools. Not knowing but our intentions were hostile, they seized their arms, quickly arose, and looked defiance at our approach. Finding we were not enemies, but wayworn travelers like themselves, they bade us "*Buenos dios señors;*" while we regaled ourselves with *agua friá* in deep and potent draughts from the brook. The scene was extremely picturesque, and forcibly brought to mind many such that fancy had woven in early life, when conning over the pages of Gil Blas.

Tarrying but a short time, we continued on over the arid and burning plain at the same brisk rate, almost the only gait of a California horse. About two o'clock we forded Bear River, here a small and placid stream, and on the opposite side stopped at "Johnson's Ranch."

A rude mud shanty, standing in the midst of this desolate plain, "Johnson's" is famous as the spot where a party of whitemen the preceding fall, had hung three Indians who murdered and robbed some of their friends. Many horses and cattle are raised here. The Oregonians and emigrants from the States, make this their favorite stopping-place on their way in, grass being abundant on the flat shores of the river, and beef plenty at the ranch. There are about a hundred Indians belonging to the ranch, who have their separate establishment a short distance off. They are called civilized, to distinguish them from the naked wild ones, who roam about with bows and arrows; and are occasionally employed to drive in cattle and do the drudgery about the place, but are a sorry-looking, indolent, and worthless set. We noticed several with their squaws, lounging about, or bathing in Bear River.

We here saw two white females, one of whom had been an inmate of the family of Dr. Whitman, at the time they were attacked and brutally murdered by the Cayuse Indians, which brought on the war in Oregon, and greatly tended to embitter the inhabitants against the Indian character. Her life was spared, and she was subsequently rescued; and is now married to a very worthy young man, one of the owners of the ranch.

Dinner was soon prepared by these industrious women, and we sat down to a more sumptuous repast than we had enjoyed for many months. Fresh beef and potatoes, pickles and preserves, pie and milk, delightful bread and fresh sweet butter, coffee and rich cream, with sponge-cake and buttermilk, were spread out on a table-cloth of snowy whiteness. It was a rich treat, refreshing to look upon, and we paid our most profound respects to this truly bountiful and delicious "feast of fat things."

Two of the party here left us. M—— and I, after paying our dollar and half apiece in gold dust, and enjoying a refreshing bath in Bear River, pursued our way across the plain towards the Juba, distant yet some twenty miles. The heat of the sun was most oppressive, and the little air that was occasionally felt made it doubly so, having that stifling glow which is emitted from the mouth of a furnace. No water could be found for many miles, and as night drew on we emerged from the plain and entered the wooded hills. Just after dusk we passed a party of ten or fifteen persons with pack horses and mules on their way to the Juba, who had paused a few minutes for repose. From them we learned that water could be obtained two or three miles ahead. Pushing on through the woods and over the steep hills, we at length descended into a deep ravine, at the foot of which a very tiny stream flowed. Having ridden in the dark for some time, we determined to halt here and encamp for the night.

Unsaddling and staking our horses, M—— proceeded further down the brook in pursuit of grass, whilst I built up a blazing fire under the prostrate trunk of a huge tree by the road-side, to keep off the mosquitoes and any animals that might be prowling about. Little grass could

be found, and our weary nags had to be content with the weeds and scanty herbage they could pick up along the margin of the stream. Having dined sumptuously, we felt no inclination for jerked-beef, but slaking our thirst with copious draughts of water, spread our blankets before the fire, and with our saddles for pillows, were soon lulled to sleep by the coyote's surly bark, and other strange sounds on the adjacent hills. The fatigue of the day's ride made it a luxury to rest, and we slumbered profoundly till "the sun awoke the jocund east."

We arose from our blankets refreshed, and making our ablutions in the brook, found our horses as we had left them, browsing hard by. The coyotes, who are noted for their daring and thievish propensities, will often approach a horse in the night, and cut the lasso with his teeth for the sake of the grease in the untanned hide. Loosed from his fastening, he will wander off, and is often difficult to be found. They had spared ours, however, though we heard their short, quick, snarling cries all around us. They have often been known to approach a tent and steal the jerked-meat from under the heads of its sleeping occupants. One was detected in the act on one occasion, by a person awake, who related it to me, and cautiously seizing his pistol, he directed its muzzle over his head at the coyote, and killed him on the spot. Doubtless our large fire contributed to keep them at bay. I have often seen and chased them. They have a frightened, thievish, sneaking look, and are of a tawny color, about the size of a bull-terrier, some larger and some smaller.

Starting forward, we rode for a few miles through the woods, and approached the brow of a long, almost perpendicular hill, overlooking the swift waters of the Juba, which flows with the same arrowy speed I had noticed in the north fork of the American River. Our horses descended the rugged steep with slow and cautious steps, crossing in a zigzag, sidelong manner, to avoid the abrupt inclination, till they safely gained the rocky shore. Here we found several tents pitched, and one or two tent-stores, around which persons were talking and swearing in the most approved California fashion. When I attempted to remonstrate with one of these, and pointed out to him not only its vice but its absurdity, and asked him why it was so general, "Oh," he replied, with an oath, "it's the nature of the country!"

Riding along a short distance, we came to a party with packed-mules, on the eve of departure, some twenty-five or thirty miles, to the "Middle Fork." They proved to be two gentlemen we had formerly met at the "Embarcadero," and stated that the water was too high to work on the Juba. They seemed very much out of patience with California, and one said, "he wished he had never seen the God-forsaken country, and were it not for the looks of the thing, he would leave it at once." This was but one of many similar instances of disgust I had witnessed. They were particularly severe on those who had given currency to "the gross exaggerations in regard to the gold mines and the country generally." Declining their polite invitation to partake of a cup of cold coffee and bologna, having already satisfied our appetites with jerked-beef and biscuit, we proceeded on, anxious to gain all the information we could as soon as possible, for the air was close and the heat intense, and the flies thick and "bit like skeeters." We were not long in obtaining the re-

quisite knowledge, which soon satisfied us that we could do much better than on this part of the Juba. Subsequently we learned that much gold was gathered on this river, but that the mortality throughout its whole extent was very great, and exceeded that of any other part of the mines. Two physicians, in full practice, had fallen victims to the fever, and much sickness prevailed till late in the fall.

Retracing our steps over the rough and rocky shore, we regaled ourselves and horses with potent quaffs from the pure, cold, crystaline water of the rapid stream, and commenced our toilsome ascent up the steep monntain. Approaching nearly to the top, we suddenly came upon a party of eight stalwart Indians, mostly nude, with fanciful feathers in their hair, and armed with bows and arrows. They were some of the wild tribe of *Diggers*, so called from making their food chiefly of roots and acorns, and digging holes in the winter to sleep in. The rascals were at first disposed to elude observation behind the trees, but finding they were noticed, they came forward, watching us narrowly. As they approached, they saw our large revolvers, of which they have great dread, and paused, vacantly staring at us, as we passed them unmolested.

Continuing on through the woods, we passed our encampment of the preceding night, where the old log still lay smouldering. Without stopping, we proceeded over the hills and emerged into the heated plain. The sun had nearly reached the meridian, and the heat was like a glowing furnace as we cantered forward. Our tongues became almost parched, and clove to our dried lips with thirst. After a long and exhausting ride, we reached the "Ranch," where another most acceptable meal was served up. Encamping about a mile off, on the shore of Bear River, under some fine old trees, we took a second dip in the water, which was most grateful and refreshing after our hot and wearisome journey.

As we lay on our blankets, before yielding to "tired nature's sweet restorer," we observed some twenty or thirty Indians, men, women, and children, bearing burdens of provisions from the ranch, to their tents and huts near by. The scene was quite animating and picturesque, in the twilight of a beautiful evening, to watch these half-naked beings trotting along over the little acclivities, and bending beneath the weight of their heavy loads. We were soon asleep, notwithstanding the mosquitoes, and did not awake till the gray streaks in the east indicated the approach of dawn.

Quickly securing our horses, we proceeded to the ranch. Here, in company with some eight or ten rough-loud-talking-Indian-killing-Oregonians, we breakfasted, and mounting our California nags were soon far away.

The morning was delightfully cool and pleasant. We saw several antelopes and deer grazing along the river; the former of which, with a curiosity that often leads them into danger, followed us for many miles. We also encountered a villainous-looking coyote, but suffered him to escape. As the heat of the day approached, we tarried for several hours at our former pretty and agreeable watering-place, and about five o'clock reached our camp, glad to return, and warmly welcomed by our friends.

CHAPTER XIII.

Determine to Establish a Tent-Hospital.—Start for the Embarcadero.—Rapid Ride.—No Water.—Ox-teams and Miners.—Pleasant Repose.—Arrive at Sacramento City.—First News from Home.—Mr. C.—A Yankee Craft.—Stray Horse.—Cotton Duck and "Little Fixens."—Lost in the Wilds.—Nothing to Eat.—Coyotes.—Antelopes.—Grizzly Bears.—Secluded Passes.—Remarkable Rocks.—Volcanic Soil.—Find the Road.—Arrive at Dry Diggings.

THE result of our visit to the Juba being so unsatisfactory, it remained to select some other locality. A point about forty-five miles higher up the country, on one of the spurs of the Sierra Nevada, and midway between the upper or extreme north fork of the American and Bear rivers, two and a half miles from each, was mentioned to me. Many miners going to these parts, had strongly urged me to establish a tent-hospital at that place. So importunate were some, and so zealous in recounting its advantages, that I at length determined to adopt their suggestions. As nothing suitable for my purpose could be obtained where I then was, it became necessary that I should visit the "Embarcadero" to carry out my plans, and make proper arrangements for such an establishment.

With this view, at day-break on a bright morning in the latter part of June, I started forward, my friends clustering around to cheer me at parting, and bid me godspeed. For the first forty miles of the way, I rode rapidly, my good horse never flagging from his accustomed *lope*. This distance I accomplished in the short space of six hours, without a drop of water for myself or horse, all the springs and mountain rivulets we had found on our way up, being completely dry. I met many ox-teams, laden with the traps of hundreds of new-comers, who on foot were wending their way to the mines. The first question asked by both parties as we met, "How far to the next water?" was rarely answered satisfactorily to either.

Stopping at the first watering-place I could discover, for two or three hours, I continued on at the same brisk rate, crossed the American River, passed Sutter's Fort, and arrived at the "Embarcadero" by six o'clock; having performed the journey, which a month before had taken nearly four days, in nine hours.

Arrived here, gladly did I welcome the first news from home. Almost six months had elapsed, and I now received letters for the first time, dated and mailed in the early part of February. Yet we had regular monthly mails established between New York and San Francisco.

Here I was at once installed under the hospitable tent of my kind friend, Mr. C——, who had been one of the sufferers from fever while on the Pacific, and for nearly six weeks was unable to leave his berth. His health was now happily restored.

Finding a Salem vessel lying in the Sacramento, laden with every thing, from a nail to a house, I was soon enabled to make my purchases there on the following morning, and much more advantageously than at either of the stores in the place. A Yankee only knows what is adapted for a particular trade. There appeared to be nothing unnecessary on board, but an infinite variety of articles most in demand, which the owners were rapidly disposing of to a throng of purchasers, and reaping a golden harvest. It is from such sources that fortunes have been so quickly accumulated in California.

Anxious to return as soon as possible, I went in pursuit of my horse, which I had staked out early in the day. He was gone. After searching for him, and inquiring of every one I met for miles round, "If they had seen my slender bay?" I at length found him about a mile below Sutter's Fort, quietly grazing on the plain, in the midst of a drove of a hundred horses, mules, and cattle. Making a halter with the lasso trailing from his neck, I mounted him "Indian fashion," and rode back to the town. This hunt caused me no little fatigue, and the day was far spent before I was ready for departure. With a hundred yards of cotton duck strapped behind my saddle, and divers other "little fixens" suspended from various parts, I mounted my high-mettled steed. The figure I presented was no uncommon sight in California, each man being compelled to give personal attention to his luggage in the capacity of both porter and transporting agent. It struck me, however, as I passed through the numbers congregated on the principal street, attracting no more than a passing notice, that a ride through one of the great thoroughfares of Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York in my present guise, would have elicited considerable remark, and been attended with some *éclat*. I was not long in reaching the ferry, though twilight set in before I got there. Staking out my horse, and obtaining supper and lodging at the ranch on the opposite side, I was ready for an early start on the following morning.

There were several paths and wagon-tracks taking the same course, but diverging a short distance from the ranch. Reflecting on the contents of my letters, I allowed my horse to choose, as I supposed, the correct route, without thinking much about it, till after riding five or six miles the seeming road abruptly terminated in a small path. Unwilling to return and lose so much time, and supposing I could not be far wrong, I kept on till I was entirely lost, and knew no more where road or path was than "the man in the moon." Though perfectly aware that my direction was a northeast course, I felt a little queer, when, on making several ineffectual attempts, first to the right and then to the left for many miles, to regain the road, I found I was completely baffled, and lost in the wilds of California sure enough. Without hesitation, I continued in the same course, taking the sun for a guide. The morning was delightfully cool and pleasant, and the ride had sufficient incident and excitement in its very loneliness to render it interesting. Coming to a little stream, I rode in to water my horse. At the moment a deer sprang from the thicket and startled him, when as luck would have it, a little bundle of edibles I had just taken from my haversack, fell from my hand into the stream and floated beyond my reach. Most ruefully did I gaze after my breakfast, thus rudely snatched from

me, but recalling the adage of "slips and lips," I was content with a draught of water, and resumed my journey, blessing the deer that had cost me so much. I saw many coyotes and antelopes. In one drove I counted twenty of the latter. As I approached, they stood for a short time watching me, then circling round towards me, they paused for a few moments to look again, and bounded off into the woods. It was a beautiful sight, and I had a good opportunity to observe them. The grizzly bears, which are numerous in the country, are generally found high up in the mountains till late in the fall, when the acorns ripen and drop from the trees. They are then frequently encountered in the valleys and near the settlements. As I was passing over a portion of country which probably had never been traversed by any but Indians and wild animals, it was not with the most confident feelings of safety that I occasionally approached a more wild and secluded part, that seemed to answer as an admirable cover for either. I had an abiding faith in my large revolver however. The soil was light, consisting of a reddish earth or sand, very similar to other parts of the country, and hardly susceptible of tillage. The frequent appearance of enormous rocks, assuming many fantastic forms, was quite singular and remarkable, and at a distance often looked like some time-worn castle. Immense flat masses rested upon their edges in towering height, and often overgrown with moss and vines, fully attesting what the volcanic character of the soil generally proved, the terrible throes of nature which in former ages had reared these mighty masses from the earth, and placed them in their present positions.

Having stopped once or twice through the course of the day, about five o'clock in the afternoon, most unexpectedly, I came out into the road at nearly right angles, within six or eight miles of the "diggins." I had no doubt that the route I traveled had shortened the distance by at least ten miles, the main road being very winding to avoid the hills, whereas I had kept a straight course, but over a much more rough and rugged country. I arrived at my tent by half past six, where several messages were awaiting me, and, fatigued as I was, had at once to start off on foot, for two or three miles down the ravine.

CHAPTER XIV.

Breaking up Camp.—Hilly Country.—Poor Soil.—A Corral.—Pack-Mules.—Mountain Traveling.—Perilous Passes.—Mulish Propensities.—Sierra Nevada.—Beautiful Plateau.—Cold Spring.—Elevated Situation.—Mountain Scenery.—Extended View.—Building a Hospital.—Sickness of Miners.—An Arbor.—Disappointed Miners.—Reckless Characters.—Oregonians.—Their Indian Strifes.—Their Gold.—Advantages to Oregon.—Utilitarian Spirit.—Departure of Miners.—Reward of Mining.—The Penalty.

Leaving my reader to imagine the bustle attendant on breaking up a camp, I will ask him to see us now all ready for departure, on a bright morning in the early part of July. Our moveables were placed in a wagon drawn by four mules. Some on foot and some on horseback, our party of six, including the muleteer, started forward in a northerly course. We continued to travel all day over a rough and hilly country, where we occasionally found springs, but rarely grass, the character of the soil differing but little from what we had noticed in other parts of the northern portion of Upper California. At noon we stopped for repose and refreshment, and by evening reached the "Corral,"* a distance of twenty-five miles. Here we slept on our blankets under the trees.

On the following morning, every thing had to be removed from the wagon, and packed on the backs of mules. The remaining part of the way was nothing more than a narrow path winding around the sides of deep precipices, or over the brows of lofty ridges, where any other mode of conveyance was impracticable. Starting forward with fifteen pack-mules, we were continually ascending throughout the day. The mountains in many parts were so abrupt, that it was extremely difficult to climb the steep path. A pack would become disarranged, and the mule would commence kicking in an extremely critical and dangerous passage, or another would leave the path on the side of an almost perpendicular ravine, where he would fall or lie down and roll for some distance below, till one of the party came to his rescue. Thus it continued till we got to our journey's end. The patience of all was nearly exhausted at the stubborn and *mulish* propensities they evinced, and we were almost choked with dust and heat, and became hoarse with calling to them, to make them follow the path. Some ludicrous scenes occurred, but I will not tax the reader by their recital here.

Towards evening we toiled for about two hours to the top of a high ridge, one of the first ranges of the Sierra Nevada. Arrived at the summit, we found a beautiful plateau, half a mile wide and a mile in length, on which a little log-store was erected. Here we pitched our tent

* A "Corral" is an inclosure where horses are kept or tamed, and branded with the owner's mark.

under some ancient oaks, for this was the chosen spot. Hard by babbled a spring of cold and delightful water, which won for the location the title of Cold Spring, conferred by an esteemed member of the party, which it will probably ever retain. Being very elevated, and within fifteen miles of snow, which was plainly discernable on the surrounding peaks, we overlooked an immense extent of mountain and plain—the top of Monte Diablo, the giant of the coast-range, appearing more than two hundred miles off.

Working manfully among the tall and slender pines on the following day, we soon had sufficient felled for our purpose; but before we had the hospital completed, a poor fellow lying under the trees near by asked admittance. He had been on a "prospecting" tour, or examining the deep canons of the river and ravines for a suitable place to dig, when suddenly seized with vertigo and sickness, he found it difficult, with the assistance of a friend, to return to the neighborhood of the spring. He was now suffering from a bilious-typhoid. In the evening two others came up from the canon, laboring under dysentery, and the next day a party of twelve Oregonians bore one of their number on a litter, a distance of six miles to the hospital. These, with several cases which soon followed, kept me busy. But I will not inflict upon my reader a detail of hospital practice. The diseases were of the same character as those I had met with below, and I found none intractable, unless the cases had been permitted to run on too long before medical aid was sought.

With the assistance of my steward and cook, both of whom were efficient, I erected an arbor, covering it with pine and cedar boughs, and formed a table and seats of the latter wood, which made a rustic but very pleasant retreat.

In this place I remained for two months, the monotony being occasionally relieved by the visit of some disappointed new-comers from the States, or the wild and reckless characters who were long residents in California, and had become indoctrinated in the semi-barbarous habits of such a life. With plenty of "the dust," they were continually roving about, spending it with the most lavish profusion. The miners from the Bear River and the North Fork, would sometimes call, either for medicines, or on their way to the little store near by for the purchase of flour and bacon, the only articles of food to be obtained. Many of the hardy Oregonians were among these visitors, and I formed some agreeable acquaintances not soon to be forgotten. For hours have I listened to a recital of their exploits in the Indian country, and to the scenes of hardship and peril through which they had passed in the early settlement of Oregon, to the midnight surprisals, the daring and successful marauds, the foray, the ambush, the nightly prowls, the deadly work of the merciless tomahawk and scalping-knife, and all those terrible events of a roving and predatory warfare, in which these hardy mountaineers had played a conspicuous part. Much is due to these enterprising pioneers, and I doubt not but our government will in good faith redeem her pledge to them. Accustomed to combat difficulties from early life, they are the very men to endure the privation and toil of miners. In most instances, each is enabled to carry back the value of from one to three thousand dollars. This accession of gold, to an agricultural and pastor-

al region like Oregon, where heretofore money was unknown as a medium of traffic, will add much to the wealth of the country, and greatly contribute to secure the comforts, if not the luxuries of life. It will also tend to develop the resources of the country, which are great. The gold of California will confer more lasting benefits on the territory of Oregon, than the former can ever hope to derive from it.

When the territory of Oregon was a howling wilderness, the government offered to every man a section of land, who would emigrate thither and settle upon it. On the faith of this, many a hardy son of the West penetrated to that remote country, and after undergoing trials and hardships of no ordinary kind, not only in obtaining the necessaries of life, but in defending their hearth-stones from the attacks of savage and hostile tribes, they at length succeeded in forming a permanent settlement in the rich valley of the Willamette. Here they have cultivated and improved the soil, and flourishing farms abound. They now look to Congress with some interest to perfect their titles, and at the time I refer to, had just elected their first representative, Hon. S. R. Thurston, to proceed thither and urge their claims to a final settlement. The well-known abilities of Mr. Thurston, who was eminently popular among them, must tell in the result of his mission. The justice of their demands is recognized out of Congress, and I trust will be there.

Whilst I was here, an election for delegates to the convention, to organize a Territorial Government, was taking place in different parts of the country. As an evidence of the utilitarian spirit prevalent, I received a bullock, with a request that I would have him slaughtered on a certain day, and, at the same time, open polls for the election of two delegates from my district. Notice was given to the miners in all directions. The bullock was killed, the polls opened, but the attraction was not sufficient. Gold was more powerful, for no one attended. The beef spoiled and the election was defeated.

As the month of August wore on, most of the miners on the two adjacent rivers, packed up their *traps* and left for parts unknown, to seek more profitable "*diggins*" elsewhere, and before I was enabled to depart scarcely a dozen remained; and worn down with the toil of the summer, and with ghastly and cadaverous looks, these were mostly encamped on the plateau, in the hope of improving their exhausted strength by inhaling the mountain air. It was pitiable to see them dragging their wasted frames, with scarcely the energy of life remaining. Health and every comfort were sacrificed, but the miserable objects were in possession of a few pounds of gold! That was the penalty, this the reward

CHAPTER XV.

Departure.—Deserted Camp.—Descent of Mountain.—Difficult Passes.—A Forest on Fire.—Toilsome and Lonely March.—Repose.—Lost Treasure.—Horse turned Banker.—Separation.—Bear River.—Hospitals.—Coyotes.—Emigrants.—An Arid Waste.—Feather River.—Lost.—Unpleasant Ride.—Agreeable Meeting.—Vernon.—Fremont.—Quails.—Arrive at Sacramento City.—Improvements.—Symptoms of Fever.—Ride to Dry Diggings and Return.—Sickness.—Embark on the Sacramento.—Arrive at San Francisco.—Kind Friends.—Convalescence.

On the 26th of August, I saw my last patient mount his horse and start for home, anxious to be out of a country that had nearly cost him his life. By the evening of that day our tents were struck, horses packed, and all were ready for departure, those who had accompanied me thus far, comprising the party. With our rifles slung over our shoulders, and taking a parting look at the deserted camp, where the little arbor and skeleton of a house with its rude bedsteads stood to tell of the past, we started forward. Descending the mountain during the twilight, we continued on through forests, across ravines, over hills and almost impassable rocks, or along the precipitous sides of deep gorges, lighted faintly by the rays of a new moon, and sometimes brilliantly by a widespread conflagration, where the woods had been accidentally or intentionally fired by some careless miners or mischievous Indians. The appearance of the bright flames, dancing through the parched undergrowth and rapidly ascending to the topmost branch of the lofty pines, seen through the trees on some distant mountain, and lighting up the whole horizon, was very magnificent. Occasionally we would have to pass over ground recently burned, when the heat and smoke were almost stifling. Unable to obtain any water by the way, we did not pause on our toilsome and lonely march till about one o'clock, when we arrived at the "Corral." The distance was computed at fifteen miles, but with the difficult route and wearisome traveling, would probably in the States be set down at thirty. Here were two log-stores. Unpacking our horses, we spread our blankets under the trees near by, and were soon in a profound sleep.

Remaining here on the following day to recruit, and enjoy the slapjacks, ham, and coffee, that were dealt out at one of the aforesaid stores, we resumed our journey on the succeeding morning. On our way a little incident occurred that, for a few hours, was a source of uneasiness to more than one of the company. About five o'clock, we stopped at what was termed the "Mormon Camp" for supper, and while discussing the goodly fare of the dames who prepared it, my horse, who was famous for such exploits, wandered off and could nowhere be found. One of my medicine chests was loosely suspended at the saddle-bow. In this, for safety, *as the medicine gave out, the bottles were replenished with*

"*dust*," and now contained the all in gold of two or three individuals, whom it had cost no little time and labor to accumulate. Search was made in every direction for the missing horse, with no little dread of the result, but in vain, and night came on before he was found, quietly enjoying a little herbage which his sagacity had discovered nearly three miles off, unconscious of the severe pangs his absence had inflicted on one at least of the party, who vowed "he should be his banker no longer."

We slept under a deserted bush-tent at the "dry diggins" that night, and had no little amusement in congratulating the individual in question on the recovery of his lost treasure, and the indiscretion of ever having chosen a horse for a banker.

Here our party separated, some going into one part of the mines and some into another. Along with *un companero*, on the following morning, I continued my way to Johnson's ranch. Again had that dreary desert of parched sand to be crossed. The streamlet in our little shady, romantic nook was dry, and we were without water till we arrived at Bear River. Here I found a hospital under way, and two additional ones about being established. As night came on, we spread our blankets under a tree, and tying our horses to the branches, were not long in getting to sleep. From this we were soon aroused by the growling of a little dog that had accompanied us, and the loud barking of a coyote within a few feet of us. Provoked at this annoyance, I quickly arose, and directed the muzzle of my rifle to the spot whence the sound proceeded, though no object could be distinguished in the hazy moonlight, and fired. The coyote uttered a cry of terror, but it was his last, and we were troubled no more that night, though we heard the barking of a dozen all round us, but admonished by the fate of their companion, they kept at a respectful distance.

In the morning we started down the plain along the shores of Bear River, intending to take Vernon, a town at the mouth of Feather River, in our route on our way to Sacramento City. Thousands who had just arrived by the overland route, were encamped on the river. And a most disastrous expedition it had proved to many, death from disease, starvation, and want of water, having made sad inroads among them. Those who escaped their early hardships by the way, now presented the appearance of ruddy health, and were here reposing, after their weary journey of over two thousand miles, to recruit themselves and animals. Pursuing our way among them for several miles, we left the shore of the river, passing over a country as cheerless and desolate as I had ever beheld. Not a tree or shrub grew for miles in extent. All was parched, waste, and flat. The sun glowed like a furnace, and no object, but an occasional ox team enveloped in a cloud of dust, relieved the dreary desolation of the scene. Riding rapidly till about three o'clock, we arrived at Nicholas' ranch, then a rude mud-hut on Feather River, and gladly did we relieve our tired animals of the weight that encumbered them.

Towards evening we continued our course, as we supposed from the directions given us. After riding for about ten miles, night came on, and the moon affording little light through the hazy atmosphere, we happened to overtake a person from whom we inquired the way, and learned to our dismay, that we were further from Vernon, than when

we left the ranch. Our only course was to return, or strike directly across the plain without pathway or guide, except the dim moon, till we could reach the shore of Feather River again, along which the road would conduct us to Vernon. We adopted the latter, passing over quagmires, through thulé marshes. and across the barren desert, followed a great part of the way by the sharp, quick bark of villainous coyotes. They would sometimes approach nearly to our horses' heels. Finding that our little pup was the main object of their pursuit, I quickly turned my horse and fired my rifle among them. With many yelps they left us, and for miles we continued to hear their cries in the distance. After riding for several hours, we came to the road, and soon experienced a most chilling sensation of cold and dampness from the fog of the river, which was excessively unpleasant. Here we were joined by three horsemen, one of whom proved to be Mr. G. W. Crane, of Baltimore. Though we had never met, he insisted on our sojourning at his lodgings, and manifested that warm-hearted hospitality and true-gentlemanly feeling, which was quite refreshing, and is pleasant to record.

Vernon is situated at the junction of Feather River with the Sacramento, at what may be termed the head waters of navigation on the latter. Though small at the time I visited it, there were evidences of rapid improvement in progress. A large hotel was nearly completed, and already accommodated some twenty or thirty at its well-furnished table. It must in time become a place of considerable importance, the country back of it, it was said, being susceptible of cultivation. The annual floods in the rivers, I was told, had never been so disastrous here as at points further down the Sacramento.

Bidding adieu to our kind and hospitable friends on the following morning, we crossed the river on a flat to the little town of Fremont, directly opposite. Two or three houses, with one store, and a few tents, comprised the place. The shore was more abrupt on this side, but there is abundant room on the extensive prairie beyond to build a large city, should it be required.

Continuing down the Sacramento, we started many coveys of quails, that gave us rare sport. The shore in some parts for a hundred and fifty yards from the river, was well-wooded and showed rich patches of verdure. Beyond this nothing grew, and the soil was loose, crisp, and burnt. We arrived opposite the Embarcadero by evening, and crossing the river again, once more stood on the classic soil of Nueva Helvetia.

Much improvement had taken place in Sacramento City since my last visit. Two or three hotels, and many frame-houses were erected. Wells were dug, and good water found, which was considered a matter of much importance, as the season was approaching when the water in the Sacramento was distasteful and unhealthy.

I had not been here but a day or two, when I began to experience sensations that too plainly indicated the baneful influence of the low, marshy, febrile district of the Sacramento. Much sickness prevailed here, and many deaths were daily occurring from dysentery and fevers. The thermometer throughout the summer had ranged from 90 to 120° of Fahrenheit.

Having a matter of imperative business to attend to at the "Dry Diggings," I mounted my horse and rode with all speed thither. This

accomplished, I returned the next day in the same rapid manner. Night set in before I reached the ford at the American River, the boat there being long since dispensed with. Burning with fever, I flew over the intervening space of seven miles to the Sacramento, at the top of my horse's speed.

On the following day, a schooner started for San Francisco. On this, accompanied by two other gentleman, I engaged passage, leaving my horse to be disposed of by a friend. How I got on board, I scarcely know. During the five days we were sailing to San Francisco, nothing passed my lips but water and medicine, and I silently lay in my hammock, suffering all the horrors of parching thirst and raging fever.

Arrived there, we were fortunate in securing lodgings at the house of a gentleman, where I received every attention and kindness. My estimable friend M—— contributed much to my recovery by his unceasing endeavors to anticipate every want. With such good nursing, aided by some kind hints from Dr. P—— of Baltimore, in about ten days I was able to leave my chamber.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rapid Improvement of San Francisco.—Unsuccessful Miners.—Engage Passage on the Steamer.—Erroneous Statements corrected.—Soil, Climate, and Mines of California.—Start for Home.—Moonlight on the Bay.—Pleasure and Regret.—Heavy Fog.—Monterey.—Convention.—Santa Barbara.—Fruits.—Agreeable Anticipations.—San Diego.—Steamer California.—Great Mortality.—Appointed Surgeon of the Oregon.—Much Sickness.—Arrive at Mazatlan.—Magnificent View.—Neatness and Thrift of the City.—A Death.—A Burial.—Campo Santo Americano.

I NOTICED even more improvement at San Francisco than at Sacramento City. Houses were building in every direction. The saw and the hatchet were constantly heard, the work being in many instances solely performed by Chinese, many of whom were here. All was life, bustle, and business. A reduction on every thing but real estate had taken place, and that had risen nearly fifty per cent. since my arrival. Many additional vessels were in the harbor, and the place was thronged with new-comers. Hundreds who had returned unsuccessful from the mines, but with wasted frames and sickly aspects, were anxious to depart for home, without the ability to do so. With no means to pay their passage, health gone and no friends, many engaged as waiters or coal-heavers on board the steamers to Panama, trusting there for an opportunity to cross the Isthmus and work their passage to New York.

Having satisfied my curiosity in regard to California, and fearful of a relapse should I return to the vicinity of the mines, I deemed it most prudent to leave the country, and along with M—— engaged passage for Panama, on the steamer to start the 1st of October. The few intervening days were occupied in preparations for departure, and reflections

on the various scenes through which I had passed since my residence in the country.

My object in visiting California was two-fold, to become familiar with its diseases, particularly at the mines, and to select a location for permanent settlement. Becoming a victim to one of the former, and my tastes not inclining to the rugged hardships of the latter, I remained only long enough to gain the knowledge I sought. That I was disappointed with the country, I am free to confess. In no one particular scarcely, did it realize my expectations. Nor am I singular in expressing this sentiment. Most whom I conversed with held similar views. The truth had not been told. Along with the discovery of gold, exaggerated statements were trumpeted forth of its agricultural resources, and of its climate. In recounting the former, among its other superior merits, the most attractive pictures were presented to the fancy, but the trials, the privations, the diseases to which the miners were exposed, were lost sight of. Pounds of the precious metal were said to be soon accumulated by all who visited the mines, but that it was accomplished by toil and hardships which few could endure, or that it was attended with any sacrifice of health or life, was studiously concealed or wilfully overlooked. Nay, the reverse was stated, whether to induce a large immigration thither, from interested or political motives, I leave others to judge.

From what I had seen of California, and heard of those parts I had not visited, I came to the conclusion that, with the exception of Napa valley, the lower Pueblo, and parts of the Santa Clara valley, but meagre portions of the whole country, it is not adapted to agricultural purposes. These parts are mostly in the possession of a few proprietors, who hold their titles from Spanish or Mexican grants. Others are excluded from participating in them, unless at rates which would be considered high in the best improved agricultural districts of the United States. They are thus left without proper culture, and benefit no one. Irrigation would be necessary in most other sections to produce any yield of grain, but from the peculiar formation of the country it would be no easy matter to affect this. The marshy districts of the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin are valueless for agricultural purposes, and are most inimical to human life. Years have been known to elapse without rain, when almost every river and streamlet was dry, and many of the cattle and inhabitants perished from thirst. Fruit is found nowhere, except in small quantities about the old Catholic missions along the southern coast, where the continual fogs moisten the soil. If it is susceptible of any thing, the number of enterprising spirits who are there will yet develop its resources; but the main reliance of California must rest on its mineral wealth, which undoubtedly is great. Scratching for gold, however, will not continue many years. The veins among the quartz boulders, the sources of all, must be sought, and scientific appliances set into operation to bring out the wealth they contain. In addition to gold, other of the precious metals and valuable ores are found, which when a regular system of mining is instituted, will probably be discovered in such vast quantities as to astound the world.

On the evening of September 30th, lighted by a brilliant moon, we were rowed to the steamer Oregon, Captain Pearson, threading our way through the three hundred ships anchored in the harbor. The usual after-

noon's gale had subsided, and the full-orbed moon gave a distinctness to every object that was peculiarly interesting, as we glided through the forest of masts and by the hulls of the different vessels, sitting gracefully upon the placid but splendid bay. We left California with feelings of pleasure mingled with melancholy regret. Pleasure at the thought of home and distant friends, and regret that in our after-recollections of California would ever be associated the scenes of vice, debauchery, and suffering we had there witnessed. It presents a wide field for the labors of the faithful missionary. At five o'clock on the morning of the 1st of October, we were aroused by the firing of the signal-gun, announcing that our departure was at hand. A heavy fog rested on the bay, and concealed the town from view. This continued throughout the greater part of the day, enshrouding all but the most prominent objects as we passed through the channel formerly alluded to, termed the Chrysopyle or Golden Gate. Towards evening we came opposite Monterey. Viewed from the bay, which is little more than an open roadstead and not to be compared for security to the harbor at San Francisco, it presents a very pretty appearance. It is situated on a gradually sloping eminence, surrounded by hills and thick woods. It is a much more desirable place for a residence than San Francisco, being exempt from those sudden transitions and chilling blasts which make the latter so exceedingly uncomfortable. The water here is also of a better quality. The houses are chiefly adobes with tiled roofs. Conspicuous among them stood the Government-House, over which floated the stars and stripes. Being the capital of the territory, it was much larger than San Francisco prior to the gold discoveries, but is now a village in comparison to it.

The convention was about closing its deliberations for the organization of a Territorial or *State* (?) Government. Colonel Fremont and half a dozen others, who were passengers thus far, here left us. Adieu Monterey.

Continuing our course all night, and till towards evening of the following day, we came opposite the old mission of Santa Barbara. It consists of a small collection of *adobes*. In the background stands the mission-buildings and cathedral. The captain procured a few pears, and queer-looking pear-shaped apples, and grapes on shore, which were well-flavored, but very inferior to the same fruits growing on the Atlantic side of our continent. We here took a few passengers on board, which made our number over three hundred. Among them were the lady and gentleman we had parted company with at Taboga, and whom I now met for the first time since that memorable occurrence. There was a Spanish widow of fifty also on board, who resided at one of the southern ports of California ; she was reputed to be immensely wealthy, was the mother of eighteen children, and now affianced to a youth of twenty-four. So much for Spanish women ! We had likewise, the French Consul and family from the Sandwich Islands, who had been "kicking up a muss generally" there, and left without demanding his passports from the Government at Honolulu, because it refused to reduce the tariff on French brandies ! Major Graham also, of the army, distinguished and promoted for his valor and services during the Mexican war ; Hon. S. R. Thurston, the first representative from Oregon ; Mr. Philip J. Tyson, an eminent geologist, who, along

with General Persifer F. Smith, Hon. T. Butler King, and others, had recently been engaged in making a rapid geological tour through California. These, with some stars of lesser note, combined to make up a variety of "great and small things," which promised to add to the enjoyment, when fatigued with seeing sights on shore, or watching the play of old ocean.

On the afternoon of the third day out, we entered the pretty little harbor of San Diego. We here made fast to the British bark Arno, lying in the port, and commenced taking coal on board. On the beach, immediately in front of our anchorage, stood the half-dozen frame hide houses, rendered famous as the point whence large shipments of hides and tallow were formerly made to the United States and to Europe, that trade constituting the only wealth of which California could then boast. The locality posssessed some interest as the point whence the commissions, under our late treaty with Mexico, would commence their labors of running the boundary line between Upper and Lower California. The town, which we could see from our position about six miles distant, consists of a miserable collection of *adobes*. It stands in an exposed sunny valley, without trees or a house of entertainment of any kind in the place.

On the morning of the fifth, a few hours prior to our departure, the steamer California, on her upward trip from Panama, came into the harbor. Her two hundred and fifty passengers cheered us most lustily, and soon crowded our decks. The inquiry was frequent why we had left California, and the reply almost invariably was, "That question will be answered at the mines." They reported eight deaths from fever, on their way from Panama.

The individual acting in the capacity of surgeon on board the Oregon, was to-day discharged as unfit for duty. The captain gave him fifteen minutes to decide, whether to pay his passage to Panama or leave the ship. The result was, that he took a passage on board the California, on a return trip for San Francisco. I was now appointed to that post, along with my friend Dr. Ward.

We found many sick on board, two or three being very seriously ill. A majority of the passengers were complaining from indisposition of one kind or another. Most of those who had been at the mines were suffering, either from the effects of disease, or from some one of the complaints incident to the country, already referred to, which they contracted before coming on board. Of course little leisure was allowed to me, and I soon found my post a most arduous one, with a fair prospect that our labors would increase as we approached the hot latitudes. This was the case, for in a few days there were fifty-seven who required daily attendance. The weather had become very warm, and overcoats and cloth, which but recently were in urgent requisition, now gave place to a much lighter material. The murky clouds and foggy atmosphere were dissipated, and the sun shone with unclouded splendor.

On the ninth we passed within half a mile of Cape St. Lucas, though I did not see it, the duties devolving upon me keeping me almost constantly occupied below. We were now steering our course for Mazatlan, across the entrance to the Gulf of California, and were rapidly leaving its rugged and barren-looking coast.

On the morning of the 10th, when I awoke, the wheels which passed near my state-room window were motionless; the engine was still; all was quiet around. The air was intensely hot, and I was wet with perspiration. Quickly going on deck, I found we were anchored about two miles off Mazatlan, which port we had made in the night. The extended view presented to my gaze was very grand. In the foreground and near our anchorage, several small islands were seen, clothed with a mantle of green, and many huge rocks reared their dark forms and stood in isolated grandeur around, against which old ocean roared and heaved his billows. In another direction, the white walls of the city *adobes* dazzling in the brilliant beams of a morning sun were visible, and numbers of *hackalas* or reed-thatched huts covered the hill-sides and the beach, amidst cocoa, orange, and palm trees. Beyond these, and nearly inclosing them, were a low dark outline of hills; while far away in the distance, the shadowy forms of the towering peaks of the Sierra Nevada of Mexico mingling with the clouds were faintly perceptible. It was like a beautiful picture, so rich was the blending of light and shadow, and so admirable the perspective. The harbor itself is very pretty, though none but small craft can approach much nearer than we then were.

After making an inspection of the sick, I went ashore, leaving my colleague in attendance till my return. Landing at a little kind of wharf with half-a-dozen friends, we spent a few hours here, very hotly, but, when in the shade, very pleasantly. As we passed through the city, we were agreeably surprised with the cleanliness of the streets, the number of neat residences, and the architectural taste frequently displayed in their construction. The beautiful arrangement of some of the stores and warehouses, filled with every variety of elegant and costly goods, also attracted our observation. The houses were mostly two stories in height, with flat roofs. They are built of brick, stone, or wood, and mortar, of which latter they receive an outside coating. They are then whitewashed, and with their neatly wrought-iron balconies over the first story, present a very pretty and bright appearance. There were indications of a thrifty business population, while the general condition of the inhabitants was so far superior to what we had been accustomed to at the towns along the Pacific, that we were almost impressed with the idea of being in a refined and elegant city. In our rambles, we entered one or two of their pleasant and airy *Foudas*, and peeped into some of their beautiful gardens. In these latter, we noticed a great variety of tropical plants and fruits, while the superb oleander and other sweet-scented flowers, filled the air with most fragrant odors.

With many pleasing recollections of Mazatlan, in a few hours I returned to duty on board. I here learned to my regret, though I had anticipated it, that one of our patients in the steerage, a very estimable man, had died during my absence. A coffin was ordered on shore, and arrangements made for his interment on an adjacent island, called "Campo Santo Americano," or *Resting place of American Saints*, where strangers who die are generally interred. With a dozen others, I attended the burial. We were rowed in two boats to the Island, up the side of which his remains were borne by four of the company, and de-

posited in the ground, amid the roar of billows on the rock-bound shore, fit requiem for the departed, for he had been master of a vessel during many years on the South American coast. He came up from Panama a few months before on board the Oregon. At the mines in California, where so many dig their graves, he was ill for many weeks, and at one time, I was told, had been delirious. He was conveyed to San Francisco under the attendance of physicians, and only left his bed to be carried on board the steamer, to die if possible at home, which he expressed a great anxiety to do, where he had left a wife and five little children. But Providence had decreed otherwise, for the expectant wife and little ones will vainly look for the return of the husband and father, whose remains quietly repose on the lonely island of "Campo Santo," surrounded by the surging roar of "the wide weltering waves," in the far-off Pacific. Peaceful be his slumbers!

CHAPTER XVII.

San Blas.—Sentinel Rocks.—Natives.—A Man Overboard.—A Hurricane.—Sublimity of the Ocean.—A Chaos.—Arrive at Acapulco.—A Mexican Dinner.—The Senorita.—Carried by Natives.—Incidents.—Gulf of Tehuantepec.—A Gale.—Interesting Occurrences.—Seasickness.—Deluging Rains.—A Monomaniac.

As night approached we weighed anchor, and flew through the water for our next stopping-place, San Blas; where we arrived about ten o'clock, on the following morning, and anchored three miles off the town. As at Mazatlan, one or two immense island rocks stood out as sentinels in lonely grandeur in the midst of the ocean. Here all similitude ceases, for the shore looked flat and uninviting in the direction of the town, which consisted of a few adobes and thatched huts, and was regarded as very unhealthy. The soil is infested with sand-flies, fleas, and other annoying vermin, whose bites are excessively painful. The inhabitants are mostly of the lower order of Mexicans, and have a cunning, sinister, and treacherous look. Many were soon along side, with their bungees or dug-outs filled with tropical fruits, and drove a thriving business among our friends on board. Several of our passengers here left us, to pursue their journey to Vera Cruz, by the route of Tepic, Guadalaxara, and Mexico.

Continuing our way down the coast, after a detention of two hours, we had a pleasant run till nightfall, though the heat began to be oppressive. As we all sat on deck, enjoying the refreshing evening breeze, a sudden cry was raised, and the voice of the mate was heard ordering the engine to be stopped and boats lowered, and again did the startling exclamation of "A man overboard!" send the blood almost curdling to the heart, and arouse all our sympathies for his safety. Quick as thought the boats were in the water, and with lights the sailors were searching over the trackless waste for the lost one. But all in vain, their search

was unsuccessful. The Captain then ordered the steamer to be put about, and we slowly returned, in the hope that some one on board might be able to descry him from the deck. The effort was fruitless, for none other than the All-seeing eye rested upon him, nor did the poor fellow ever behold the light of another day. It was soon ascertained that the second cook, a colored man, was missing. Incautiously sleeping near the side on the upper forward-deck, he was seen to roll off by some persons near by, who gave the alarm. As he fell directly in front of the wheel-house, the ponderous machine causing a suction in its revolutions, must have drawn him under and caused instant death. Much consternation and sympathy were aroused on board by the sad catastrophe, and no effort was spared to save the unfortunate man—but his time had come.

The morning of the 14th opened with a cloudy sky, and a sodden and uncomfortable atmosphere. Towards twelve o'clock the rain poured in torrents, driving every one from the deck. Awnings were taken down, wind-sails removed, and sky-lights closed, which made the heat and closeness of the cabin and state-rooms almost insupportable. Towards evening the wind blew a furious gale, and for about four hours we had a terrible time of it. Being in sight of land, and but seven miles off Acapulco, where it would have been hazardous to enter, we stood out to sea to avoid a wreck on the Mexican coast, the machinery being a good deal strained and out of repair. Had this given way in any important part, the sails could not have preserved the ship in such a tempest. The gale each moment continued to increase, till at length it became a wild hurricane. The sublime fury of the wind and waves on deck, and the whistling and howling of the storm around the steam-pipe and through the rigging, the seasickness and consternation among many below, with the creaking and laboring of the vessel through the heaving tempest, the almost incessant crashing of glass in the form of tumblers and wine-bottles, with the waiters and crew running hither and thither to protect different articles from further damage, or to secure those that had escaped, presented a scene of confusion, uproar, and alarm, that beggars all description. We had some half-a-dozen old sea-captains among the passengers, who concurred in the opinion that they had never witnessed a more sudden or terrific hurricane. Some appeared to have little confidence in the ability of the steamer to hold out against it, dreading lest her machinery should become disabled. At length the fury of the storm was spent, the wind lulled, the rain continued to fall in torrents, the lightning flashed vividly, the thunder rolled, and the mountain waves sunk to a gentle swell. We stood off and on the land all night, with a light head of steam. The morning continued cloudy, rainy, and squally. Making for Acapulco, we cast anchor in the admirable little harbor about five o'clock in the afternoon. We here found the steamer Unicorn, belonging to the line of which the Oregon was one, with passengers, on her first trip from Panama, and the propellor Hartford, which left the States in January and had been wrecked off Bermuda. A British coal-vessel and a French bark were also lying in the port. We were soon surrounded by the natives, offering eggs and milk, with various fruits and vegetables for sale.

The following morning was clear, and the sun rose with a bright

but scorching heat. Perambulating the streets, I met a Spanish gentleman, a merchant, from whom I had made some purchases on a former visit, and for whose child I had then prescribed. He expressed much pleasure at the unexpected meeting, and with cordial hospitality insisted on myself and party of two ladies and a gentleman accompanying him home to dine. As it is not every one who has sat in the domestic circle at a Mexican board, I will recount, for the benefit of my readers, the arrangements at our repast. The table was covered with a snow-white cloth, and set in the veranda or large stone-paved portico, surrounding the court-yard or garden, where an abundance of tropical fruits grew within reach of our hands, in all the luxuriance of these hot countries. The family of our host who took their seats, consisted of himself, wife, and daughter, the latter a buxom young lady of fifteen, with features of a partly Aztec origin, and a deep-copper complexion, derived from the mother. Our first course consisted of vermicelli soup. This was followed by boiled fresh beef, and an immense dish containing a variety of vegetables, such as roasted hominy, nubbins of fresh corn, fried bananas, boiled squash and pumpkins, and others with whose names I was not familiar. Next came beef-a-la-mode, tortillas, and claret. Then a kind of baked pudding, consisting of soft-boiled rice beaten with eggs and milk, underneath which was a layer of finely chopped meat, well-flavored. Preserved cocoa and preserved limes completed the dinner. Several servants were in attendance, who changed the plates and knives and forks at each course.

On rising from the table at the conclusion of our repast, our friend's daughter manifested much admiration for the two ladies. She seemed deeply interested in their costume, amusing herself by measuring them across the shoulders, around the waist, the foot. the ankle, &c. On being interrogated whether she preferred Americans or Mexicans, she quickly replied, "*Mexicano Malo, Americano bueno, grande!*"

Parting from our kind friends, we adjourned to the cathedral, and after viewing the interior, and finding little to interest in its rude construction, we walked to the beach, and were each carried in the arms of a native through the surf into the boat, and rowed on board. We all agreed that the day had been decidedly a pleasant one, so far as its social enjoyment was concerned, but excessively hot.

At twelve o'clock on the following day, we weighed anchor, and bade adieu to Acapulco. As we were rounding-to to leave the harbor, one of the steerage passengers in the height of exuberant feeling, caused by over indulgence in the killing aquardiente of Acapulco, leaped overboard, and unable to swim must have inevitably been drowned, had not the numerous canoes and boat-loads of natives along side, hurried to his aid. It was the display of the folly of a drunken man. Another, too much intoxicated to care for any thing, was urged to come on board at the time of starting. Persuasion was unavailing, and the poor fool was left. By the morrow he probably realized to its full extent, the awkward situation to which his brutal vice had reduced him, that of being left penniless and friendless, a stranger in a strange land.

The following morning was lowering and rainy, with a fresh breeze and high sea. Crossing the Gulf of Tehuantepec, ever famous for its storms and strong currents, and much dreaded by the early navigators,

the sea continued to rise, and dark-swelling waves would heave our noble ship almost upon her side. By night, which set in with black, portentous-looking clouds, the breeze had increased to a gale, and the mighty billows thumped and lashed her sides with terrible energy, causing every timber within her to strain and creak with the furious power of the element on which she floated. Much seasickness occurred, and great was the crashing of china, glass, and crockery. Often throughout the night, we would suddenly be aroused by some deafening crash, frequently caused by a case of wine leaping from a state-room shelf, which some unlucky wight had laid in at Acapulco and placed there. Though secure in a calm sea, it was ever ready to pour out its juicy contents, when so unceremoniously and rudely tapped. Great was the terror of some, and much the amusement of others, which these interesting occurrences called forth.

The gale had not abated by morning, and the waves continued to roll along in mountain majesty. Our steamer, though stamped as a superior, stiff, and steady sea-boat, was here compelled to yield, to bound, to plunge, to tremble, to "reel and topple like a drunken man." Many rueful countenances were disclosed, the consequence of a sleepless night and—sick stomach! Numerous and dismal were the complaints made. I was followed, headed, cornered, and annoyed at every turn. Having more serious cases on hand, my patience was not a little tried in being delayed to listen to the lugubrious accounts of a sickness, which a calm sea alone would at once remove. I endeavored however to sympathize in their dolorous griefs as much as possible.

By the morning of the following day, a change occurred. The sun arose with a brilliant warmth, and the waves were quieted to a gentle swell. We had passed Tehuantepec, and now over a comparatively smooth sea were speeding the way for Panama.

This did not continue long, for by twelve o'clock the sky was overcast, and for the next two days deluging rains poured down, as though the flood-gates of heaven were opened. Being almost constantly engaged in attendance on the sick, many of whom had recovered or were convalescent, I had little time to devote to other matters, and many interesting points of land escaped my observation which I otherwise should have noticed. Among those who gave me most trouble, was a young man in tolerably good bodily health, but a monomaniac, and fully impressed with the idea that he would die at sea. So strongly had this hallucination taken possession of his mind, that no argument or reasoning could dissipate it. Often was I called in the middle of the night to visit him, when he would request me to write his will as he could not live till morning, or beg that I would entreat the captain not to throw him overboard, but to have him buried at Panama. On all other subjects he was perfectly rational. I pitied the poor fellow, and did all in my power to overcome this singular propension of his mind. He had been ill in California, and became alarmed from witnessing the sickness on board. He offered me a thousand dollars if I would see him safely over the Isthmus. I declined his money, but told him we would yet meet in New-York. He laughed incredulously at this, but lived not only to cross the Isthmus on a mule, but to laugh in New York at his folly on the Pacific.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bay of Panama.—Beautiful Scene.—Disembarkation.—Panama in the Wet Season. Engage Mules.—Trouble with the Natives.—Start across the Isthmus.—Rainy Season.—Execrable Passages.—Dark Ravines.—Romantic Defiles.—Mountain Torrents.—Miry Beds.—Cargodores.—A Guard.—A Night on the Isthmus.—Arrive at Cruces.—New Granadian Honesty.—Justice.—Punishment.—Start for Chagres.—River in the Rainy Season.—Gorgona.—Lazy Boatmen.—Arrive at Chagres.—A Storm.—The Empire City.—Comfortable Accommodations.—Railroad across the Isthmus.

On the 23d we entered the Bay of Panama, and glided along over a pleasant sea. As evening approached, the sun set gloriously behind the lofty hills of the "Pearl Islands," and as night drew on the moon shone brilliantly through the clear transparent atmosphere. The air was soft and balmy. It was a calm and beautiful scene.

We cast anchor about nine o'clock, and fired a gun which soon brought numerous bungees along side. The clattering tongues of the natives, the confusion of preparing the luggage for departure on the following morning, and, shall I say, the carousing on board, drove sleep from all eyes. Rising early, I went ashore, and with M—— engaged a private apartment, intending to take our meals at a restaurant near by, several of which, conducted mostly by Yankees, were in active operation.

Panama looked the same as formerly, except that the streets gave indications of recent washings from heavy rains. Mud, steam, and heat prevailed, though not to the same extent as I had anticipated. The rainy season was not yet over, several showers occurring throughout the day.

Finding that mules were scarce, and that owing to the demand prices had advanced, we were not able at once to secure any. The best were reserved for the mails, and the large amount of gold dust we had on board. We at length succeeded in obtaining a sufficient number for our purposes, stipulating that they should be at the door of our lodgings by five o'clock on the following morning. But who that has bargained with these slothful and dilatory people, ever knew them to adhere to a contract? The morning came, but so did *not* our mules, and running hither and thither to find our man, we eventually learned that those designed for our use were given to higher bidders, who were now far off on their way to Cruces. By dint of threats and a little rough usage, we compelled him to procure others at a slight advance, and by twelve o'clock we started forward, passing through the gate at at which we entered, and went on our way rejoicing.

The day was cloudy, with slight showers, but as these were light, the sun's being obscured was rather favorable than otherwise. In passing through the suburbs, a *muchacho* offered to sell me a little wooden cage containing two beautiful birds, called by the natives *bing-bing* and *sago*,

for *dos pesos*. These I purchased and carried across the Isthmus, but both escaped before I reached Chagres.

The way was pleasant enough, till we came to the point where the path diverges to Cruces and Gorgona. Taking the former, the other during the rainy season being deemed impassable, we soon came to deep beds of mud, gully-holes, and ravines, similar to what we had encountered on our way over, except that they were much more extensive, constituting the greater part of the route. These passes were often execrable. They had been once paved, the enormous stones used for that purpose lying loosely about and almost blocking the way. Between these, the cautious mules would step, to the no small danger of their legs and the rider's neck. In other parts the surface is bare, with steps or holes worn in the sandstone rock, down or up which the animals would slide or climb. In many places these ravines are so dark, gloomy, and solitary, with the mass of foliage that incloses them overhead, that it is pleasant to emerge into the sunlight, even if the way conducts through a swamp or directly in the bed of the mountain torrents, which it frequently does for miles. In passing over one of these miry beds, my mule fell backward, but without being thrown I instantly recovered him, no other harm accruing, (I acknowledge the "*soft* impeachment,") save a thorough bedabbling with mud. I saw a mule with a mail-bag and a native on his back, plump heels over head into one of these soft places. It was an amusing sight, and they cut a sorry figure. There are many beautiful and romantic defiles, besides many "execrable passages" on the Cruces road, but I did not find it so mountainous as the Gorgona route. We met and passed many of the natives, tottering under the enormous weights fastened to their shoulders, and reeking with perspiration, on the way with *cargo*, either to Panama or Cruces. A drove of twenty mules passed us at one place, laden with little boxes of specie. They were driven by the natives, and about half a mile behind them walked a diminutive Indian soldier, with an enormous rusty flint-lock musket, that looked as if it never had been used, resting in the hollow of his arm. He was the guard to the escort.

We stopped once through the day to lunch, and when night came on sought refuge under a shed. Here, in a half-sitting posture, leaning against the trunks, and among the *interesting* natives, we slept. In the night it rained a deluge, and as the head and shoulders of many were all that could be squeezed under the thatched roof, some were well-drenched.

Starting forward early on the following morning, and toiling over the steep passes, among the rocky defiles, through the water-courses, and along the miry way, with an occasional refreshing shower, we reached Cruces about two o'clock. This is a miserable, muddy little place of reed-built and palm-thatched huts, similar to other towns on the Isthmus. In one of these we deposited our luggage, swung hammocks, and prepared to pass the night, after considerable difficulty in obtaining wherewith to satisfy the cravings of nature.

There were few canoes here fit to transport our party to Chagres. We were therefore compelled to remain for several days, and await their arrival from below. In the mean time we had an example of New Granadian honesty, justice, and punishment.

A party of four gentlemen had stipulated with a person in Panama, to convey their luggage to Cruces. Anxious to get over, and supposing it would consume two days if they accompanied their trunks, they entered into a written agreement with this individual and gave them into his charge. Two of the party had left for Chagres, the others vainly awaiting the arrival of their luggage. Passing through the town with one of these gentleman, we espied the individual in whose charge they were placed, and immediately took him before the Alcalde. The man stoutly denied any knowledge of the trunks. Having his signature, he was made to rewrite it, which compared with the original, at once convicted him, and he confessed that the trunks were still in Panama, he having come over to see that the owners had gone down the river, before returning to pilfer their contents. He was now made to write an order for them, with which a man was sent to Panama, while the thief was condemned to the stocks. We saw him there under the large shed, which constitutes the jail, along with half-a-dozen others in the same predicament, smoking their segars with the most perfect *nonchalance*. The trunks, however, were never restored. One of them contained nearly a thousand dollars in gold dust and valuable papers, but its owner was too unwell to return to Panama and attempt its recovery.

Canoes having arrived from Chagres, and fearful of being left by the steamer there, I determined no longer to await the movements of those whose luggage had not arrived; I therefore engaged one with two other gentlemen, and on the afternoon of the 28th of October we started for Chagres, glad to escape the mud and filth of the town. Thousands of parrots and paroquets were flying through the air, whose chattering and screams we could only compare to that of the natives themselves. We noticed the same profuse verdure as formerly, the same beautiful vines clinging to the boughs of trees and sweeping the surface of the water, and the same redolence in the air. The river was more turbulent from recent rains, was swollen, and the water not so clear as when we passed up. A shower soon drove us into our little den, where we kept tolerably dry.

Arriving at Gorgona about nightfall, our boatmen insisted on stopping, promising to be ready to start in a short time. Several hours elapsed, and still they came not, and on going in pursuit of them, I found the worthless pack, seated in a circle on the ground-floor of one of the huts, deeply absorbed at a game of cards. It was only by offering them a bribe, that we could induce them to proceed. We had gone but a few miles, before we run on a sand-bar, and here another detention of several hours occurred. The "patrone" and his men were at once in the water, and worked most indefatigably before we were extricated. Floating with the current, our men had little more to do than keep the canoe in the channel. With nothing to disturb the quiet around, the monotonous ripple of the water soon lulled us to sleep, from which we awoke to find ourselves stationary at the shore, our boatmen gone, and surrounded by about twenty canoes that had stopped here on their way up. Calling for the "patrone," we threatened him with a forfeiture not only of his bribe, but the whole passage-money, unless he instantly got under way. This had the desired effect, and amid almost continual rain on the following day, we floated down the stream. It was nearly

night when the turrets of San Lorenzo came into view. Urging our dilatory rowers to all their speed, we quickly shot into the little cove on which the dismal-looking town of Chagres stands. The surf ran high, the air was darkened with heavy clouds, quick and vivid flashes of lightning gleamed through the sky, the thunder rolled, the rain poured in torrents. Noticing two steamers in the offing, we were told by our consul, Mr. Gelston, that he feared we were too late, as both the vessels, the Empire City and British Steamer Tay, were on the point of departure. Observing a boat shoot through the channel at the base of the castle, we hailed her, and found she belonged to the Empire City. Quickly putting our trunks on board, we were rowed out, but it was with some difficulty we managed to get on the steps at her side, owing to the heavy swell. Another boat followed us with females on board, who had crossed from Panama without accident. It was pleasant to reflect that we were now over all the difficulties and delays of the Isthmus, and were comfortably arranged on a magnificent ship in the Atlantic, fitted with all the luxuries and accommodations of a first-class hotel. I was not long in obtaining a glass of ice-water, and what a luxury did it prove!

A completion of the contemplated railroad across the Isthmus, will relieve travelers from all the dangers and annoyances to which they are now subjected by this route, and as they sit in the comfortably-cushioned cars, and are whirled over in an hour or two, they will hardly be able to conceive of the trials and difficulties the pioneer travelers had to endure.

CHAPTER XIX.

Leave Chagres.—Port Royal.—Sunken Ruins.—Kingston.—Coffee Plantations.—Vicious Blacks.—"We colored population."—The City.—Its Churches.—Railroad.—Curiosity Shops.—Climate.—Markets.—Santa Anna.—Marmoset.—Return on board.—Leave Jamaica.—Arrive in New York.—Home.

About nine o'clock, with the mail on board, we started forward across the Gulf of Darien, and soon entered on the short swell of the Caribean Sea, and after a pleasant run of two days and a half we entered the harbor of Port Royal, opposite the Government buildings. They stand at the extreme point of a narrow peninsula, and about three miles distant by water from the city of Kingston.

Port Royal was once a place of considerable importance, but destroyed by an earthquake in the latter part of the seventeenth century, nothing remains to tell of the site of the proud city, but this strip of land and the water that floats over its sunken ruins.

Kingston is situated on a low, sandy beach, backed by the high mountains of Jamaica. These are covered with coffee plantations, which have greatly fallen into decay since the emancipation act. I would advise all favorable to the immediate abolition of slavery, to visit the

island of Jamaica, and particularly Kingston. Containing about 35,000, the greater part of the inhabitants are blacks, and of the most insolent and vicious character. Here, dressed in the garb of the British soldier, they enjoy freedom in perfection.

Perambulating the streets, I was greatly annoyed with the importunities of the "colored population," either in the form of beggars, or "to show Massa California where he can buy any thing in de great city of Kingston." They suppose that if a man has been to California, he has of course returned with a gold mine in his pocket. Acting upon this principle, the rascals take care to charge well for any little service or information required of them.

Taking one of the many dilapidated hacks that were most industriously urged upon me, I drove through some of the principal streets, the houses of which I found pretty much on a par with my vehicle. Some of them in other parts presented a very elegant and tasteful appearance, surrounded by gardens containing flowers, vines, and trees. Many beautiful residences are seen a short distance from the city. Having but a few hours to remain on shore, I desired my sable guide to drive to every place of interest with which he was acquainted, in the shortest possible time. Obeying my wish, he pointed out the military barracks, theatre, and several churches of the Episcopal, Catholic, and Methodist denominations, all near each other, and built around a vacant space, or common, in the upper part of the city. Clustered around the square, though most incongruously, they presented a very pretty appearance. Continuing my ride, we came opposite to the railway station, a fine brick edifice. The road conducts to Spanish Town, distant some fifteen miles in the interior, and the capital of the island. Stopping at some of the elegant-looking variety stores which abound in Kingston, I was not a little surprised with the rich fabrics and endless curiosities they disclosed, but somewhat perplexed at the pertinacity their owners occasionally evinced to force sales, *nolens volens*.

The climate of Kingston is pleasant, for though the sun was hot, it was not oppressive, and is generally considered remarkably healthy. The interior is represented as a Paradise. The streets were very dusty, with narrow sidewalks, and the houses built of dingy brick. The markets were stocked with all kinds of vegetables and tropical fruits. The exiled Santa Anna has here taken up his abode within a short distance of the city. Aware that he was not fond of receiving visits from Americans, and particularly those returning from a territory so recently wrested from his country, I declined Sambo's offer of driving me thither, for as I had purchased a *monkey*,* I cared not to see the *lion*.

* I had bought a beautiful little animal of the monkey tribe, a Marmoset, recently caught near Bogota in New Granada, which I valued as a rare specimen of its class. Not much larger than one's hand, with long, bushy white hair standing out from a most diminutive black face, it had all the tricks and playfulness of the monkey, without his vicious propensities, and was a most interesting and attractive little animal. He fed on fruits and vegetables. When he would see me approaching, he would whistle with the clear, soft, and varied notes of an accomplished mocking-bird. I kept him till I arrived at New York, when finding it necessary to leave him on board for twenty-four hours, I placed him in charge of a female employed on the steamer, who neglected my particular request to attend to him, and he perished from cold.

Alighting from my crazy vehicle at the upper landing, I found several of my friends waiting to be conveyed on board. Engaging a boat from among a dozen, the superior merits of each of which, were most loudly extolled by their dusky owners, in about an hour and a half we came along side the steamer in a torrent of rain.

Not having completed our supply of coal till the following day, and being unable to obtain correct information as to the time of our departure, I did not venture again on shore. It was night however before we got under way, and bade adieu to Kingston.

Little of interest occurred from this time to the end of our voyage. We saw three water-spouts, cruised along the coast of San Domingo, steamed through the "Windward Passage," and with much rain, a high sea, and head-winds, rolled on our course for New York, where we arrived on the morning of Sunday the 11th of November, having made our run from Chagres in the space of nine days.

Leaving my reader among the Gothamites, I hasten on to the Monumental City.

THE END.

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